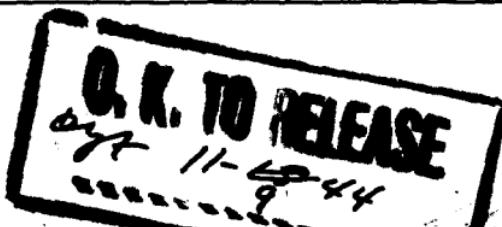


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FM 17-25

WAR DEPARTMENT FIELD MANUAL



ASSAULT GUN SECTION AND PLATOON

Ltr. Clg AFF 23 Nov 1950

INTERDiction **DISSEMINATION OF RESTRICTED MATTER.**—The information contained in restricted documents and the essential characteristics of restricted material may be given to any person known to be in the service of the United States and to persons of undoubted loyalty and discretion who are cooperating in Government work, but will not be communicated to the public or to the press except by authorized military public relations agencies. (See also par. 23b, AR 380-5, 15 Mar 1944.)

WAR DEPARTMENT • 8 SEPTEMBER 1944

W A R D E P A R T M E N T F I E L D M A N U A L
F M 17—25

THIS MANUAL SUPERSEDES FM 17—25, 25 JUNE 1942.

ASSAULT GUN SECTION AND PLATOON



W A R D E P A R T M E N T — 8 S E P T E M B E R 1 9 4 4

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WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON 25, D. C., 8 September 1944.

FM 17-25, Assault Gun Section and Platoon, is published for the information and guidance of all concerned.

[AG 300.7 (8 Sep 44).]

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

J. A. ULIO,
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION:

As prescribed in par 9a, FM 21-6 except Armd Sch (500), D 2, 7 (5), 17(10); I Bn 2(38), 7(25), 17(30).

I Bn 2: T/O & E 2-25;

I Bn 7: T/O & E 7-25;

I Bn 17: T/O & E 17-15; 17-25; 17-45S; 17-55; 17-125.

For explanation of symbols, see FM 21-6.

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WAR DEPARTMENT FIELD MANUAL

ASSAULT GUN SECTION AND PLATOON*

This manual supersedes FM 17-25, 25 June 1942.

Chapter 1

GENERAL

1. PURPOSE. This manual is a guide to the employment of the assault gun platoon of the tank battalion, armored infantry battalion, the platoon of the assault gun troop of the mechanized cavalry reconnaissance troop, and the assault gun section of the medium tank company.

2. CHARACTERISTICS. a. **105-mm Tank (fig. 1).** This is a medium tank, M4, with a 105-mm howitzer mounted in the turret. It has 360° traverse. In addition to the howitzer it has two caliber .30 machine guns—one mounted coaxially with the howitzer and one in the bow—and one caliber .50 machine gun mounted on the turret for antiaircraft defense. High explosive, HE AT, and smoke ammunition is carried. This is the assault gun for tank and armored infantry battalions.

* For military terms not defined in this manual see TM 20-205.



Figure 1. Medium tank, 105-mm howitzer.

b. 75-mm assault gun motor carriage M8 (fig. 2) This is the assault gun for the mechanized cavalry reconnaissance squadron. It is the 75-mm howitzer mounted on M8 motor carriage. It has 360° traverse. The characteristics of the carriage are similar to the light tank M5. A caliber .50 machine gun is mounted on the turret for antiaircraft defense.

3. ORGANIZATION. a. Tank battalion. The standard tank battalion has an assault gun platoon in its headquarters company and a section in each medium tank company. The platoon is composed of a platoon headquarters, three gun sections, and an ammunition section. The platoon headquarters is mounted in a half-track

personnel carrier and is equipped with radio. The assault gun section, both of the platoon and in the medium tank company, consists of a 105-mm medium tank which tows an M10 trailer. It is equipped with radio. The ammunition section has a half-track carrier which tows a trailer. It has no radio set.

b. Armored infantry battalion. The organization of the assault gun platoon of the armored infantry battalion is the same as the standard tank battalion. There are no assault guns assigned to rifle companies.

c. Mechanized cavalry. The assault gun platoon of the assault gun troop of the mechanized cavalry reconnaissance squadron has a platoon headquarters and two gun sections. The gun sections are equipped with the 75-mm howitzer motor carriage which tows an ammuni-

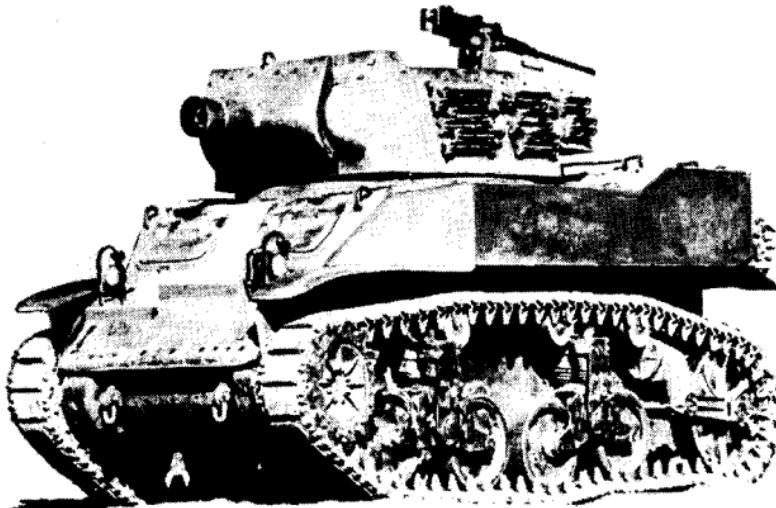


Figure 2. Carriage, motor, 75-mm howitzer.

tion trailer. The platoon headquarters is mounted in a half-track carrier. The platoon headquarters and the gun sections are equipped with radio.

4. MISSION. a. The primary mission of the assault gun is to give close fire support to small units—battalion, company, platoon. In this role it relieves the artillery of some close support missions but does not replace artillery fire.

b. As a secondary mission, assault guns may be grouped and used as reinforcing artillery. Such missions must not interfere with their primary mission of close support.

5. EMPLOYMENT. a. Assault guns with the battalion headquarters company are employed normally as a platoon directly under the battalion commander. They may be attached to lower units as needed for particular operations. The assault gun section of the medium tank company usually will operate with the company. When not needed for direct support of the tank company, this section may operate with the battalion assault gun platoon.

b. The assault guns of the assault gun troop mechanized cavalry usually operate by section with reconnaissance platoons. The cavalry assault gun platoon or troop may operate as a unit when in support of a reconnaissance company and light tank company in penetration of a counterreconnaissance screen or similar missions. See FM 2-20 and FM 2-30.

c. Assault guns are employed with the base of fire to support the maneuvering force, whether tanks, infantry, or cavalry. In defense they are used as close support weapons for their units.

d. Assault guns may be employed either by direct or indirect laying methods. Direct laying requires minimum time for fire adjustment and minimum expenditure of ammunition for effective fire. It has the disadvantage of exposure of the gun to hostile direct and observed fire thus requiring frequent changes of position. Indirect laying requires a greater expenditure of time and ammunition, but the guns are protected from hostile

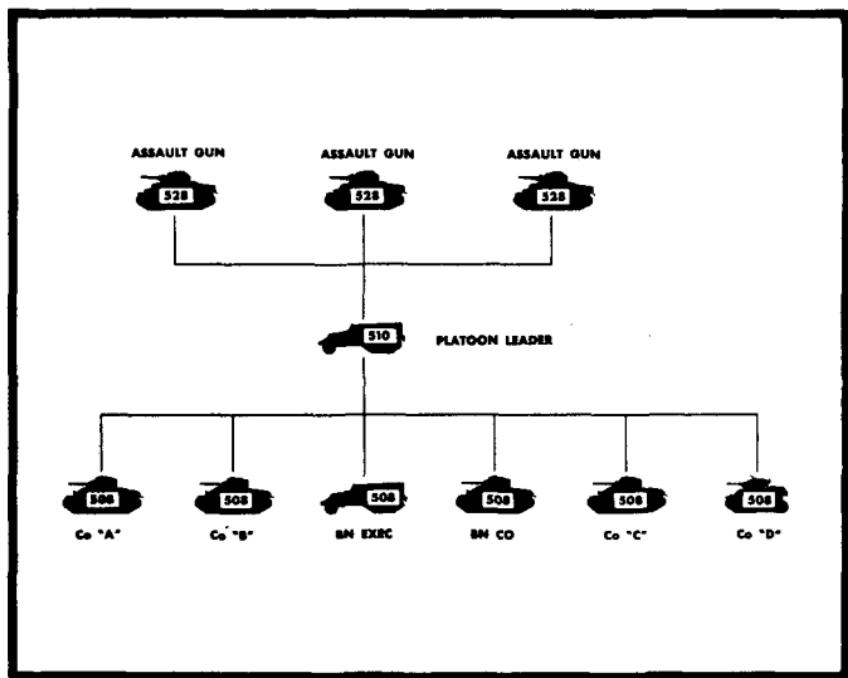


Figure 3. Normal radio nets, tank and armored infantry battalions. The assault gun platoon leader may communicate in the battalion command net with either the executive officer, the battalion commander, or with any company commander. The assault gun section may change to the company channel of any company it may be called on to support, or change to the battalion command channel. The infantry assault gun platoon has a similar net, except there are no sections in the company, and the battalion commander is mounted in a half-track.

ground observation and direct fire. The necessity for close and continuous support of units in the attack usually will necessitate fire by direct laying except in the initial attack and when supporting an infantry attack (par 34).

6. COMMUNICATION. Communication within the assault gun platoon and to higher headquarters is by voice radio, visual signals, and messengers (FM 17-70). Each assault gun has interphone for communication among the crew. For types of radio equipment see current Tables of Organization and Equipment. Figures 3 and 4 show radio communication nets for the assault gun platoon.

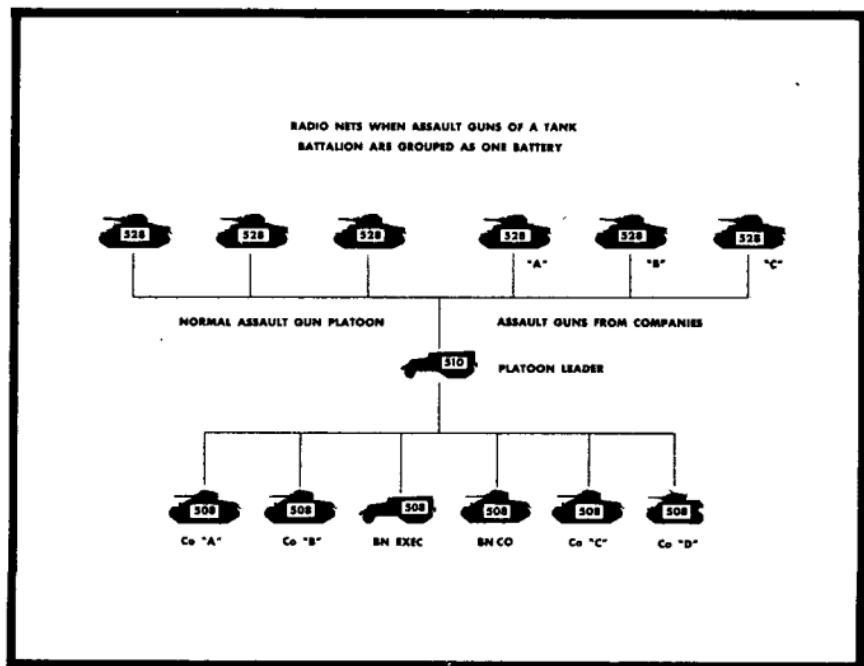
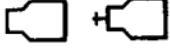


Figure 4. The assault gun attached to the assault gun platoon enters the assault gun platoon net by selecting the proper channel on the SCR-528.

LEGEND.—



Carrier, Half-track (platoon leader)



Carrier, Half-track (ammunition carrier) (w/trailer, M10)



75 mm How, Carriage, Motor, M8 (w/trailer, M10)



105 mm How, in Medium Tank (w/trailer, M10)

Figure 5. Special symbols used in this manual.

Chapter 2

TRAINING

7. GENERAL. Fundamental training doctrines are prescribed in FM 100-5, FM 21-5, and TM 21-250. Mobilization training programs cover details of subjects to be taught. For text references on training see FM 21-6, FM 21-7, and FM 21-8.

8. SEQUENCE IN TRAINING. a. After individual training, permanent crews should be assigned to each vehicle. Each man is trained to perform the duties of each other crew member. Steps in training include—

- (1) Operation and handling of equipment.
- (2) Care and maintenance.
- (3) Crew drill.
- (4) Gunnery.
- (5) Tactical training in—
 - (a) Marches.
 - (b) Security.
 - (c) Firing positions.
 - (d) Attack.
 - (e) Pursuit.
 - (f) Defense.
 - (g) Delaying action.
 - (h) Withdrawal.

b. Thorough planning must be made for each tactical exercise; the exercise should be carried through to a logical conclusion; and it should be repeated as necessary until fundamentals are thoroughly understood. The

following procedure may be used in preparation and conduct of exercises:

(1) Select ground suitable for the exercise contemplated.

(2) Plan the problem on a map and check it on the ground. Look at it from both the friendly and enemy sides.

(3) The problem then is conducted on a sand table with the use of wooden blocks or small scale models of vehicles and troops. Soldiers of the assault gun platoon attend this session. The instructor asks questions of non-commissioned officers and selected privates. The problem is repeated several times as necessary.

(4) The assault gun platoon (section) then solves the problem on the ground. A critique, in which the supervising officer points out the errors and summarizes the lessons learned, follows each solution. Problems are repeated until a high standard of proficiency is attained. During each problem all officers and noncommissioned officers watch carefully, note all errors, and where practicable, correct them on the spot.

9. TERRAIN APPRECIATION (FM 5-15). Terrain appreciation is the ability to observe and interpret accurately all important terrain characteristics from ground, aerial, or map reconnaissance to provide for correct tactical use of the ground and complete use of available natural cover. It can be acquired only by thorough training and constant practice. Training in tactical appreciation of terrain covers—

a. Terrain features, areas, and objects to be avoided, including—

(1) Terrain which lacks sufficient natural cover.

(2) Terrain not readily passable by the platoon's ve-

hicles, as eroded areas, steep slopes, swamps, streams with steep banks, and soft beds or heavy woods.

(3) Terrain open to direct enemy observation regardless of overhead cover, ridges, and crests.

(4) Unusually prominent and logical targets for enemy artillery and aerial bombardment.

b. Routes of approach or attack, or areas to be occupied which offer the best natural cover, both overhead and defilade.

c. Terrain well suited to the use of armor.

10. FIRING POSITIONS. a. Firing positions for the assault gun require—

(1) Good fields of fire.

(2) Adequate observation.

(3) Natural cover and concealment.

(4) Covered avenues of approach.

(5) Good standing (slope and firmness).

b. The platoon leader and his subordinates reconnoiter all terrain with the following in mind (figures 6-12):

(1) Where is the next suitable firing position to my front?

(2) To my flanks?

(3) What is the best practicable route to that position?

(4) What is the best route out of the present position?

c. There are three types of firing positions—primary, alternate and supplementary.

(1) The *primary firing position* is that from which the platoon or section executes its primary mission.

(2) The *alternate firing position* is that from which the platoon or section can execute its primary mission if the primary position for any reason becomes untenable.

WRONG



Do not occupy firing position on crest of hill.

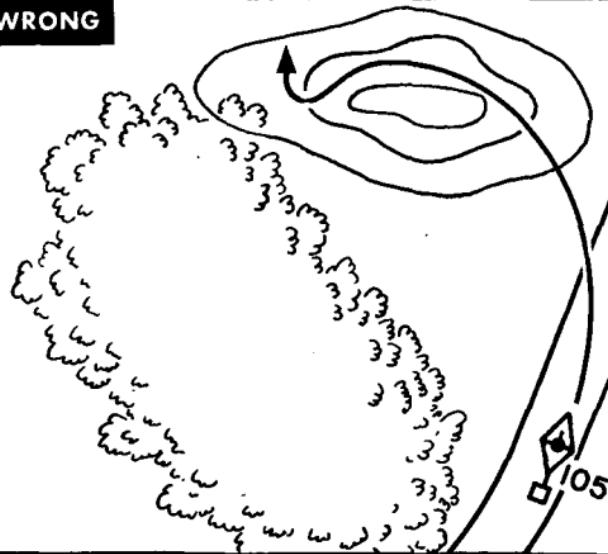
RIGHT



Select position behind crest so that hull of the vehicle is defiladed with only gun exposed.

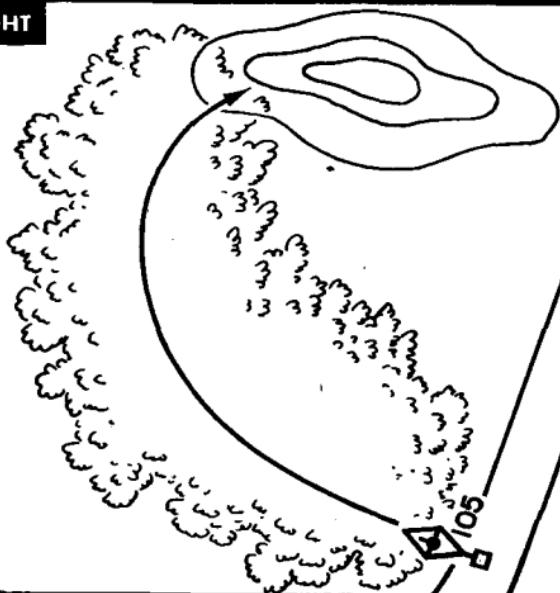
Figure 6. Defiladed position for direct fire.

WRONG



Do not move along crest to firing position.

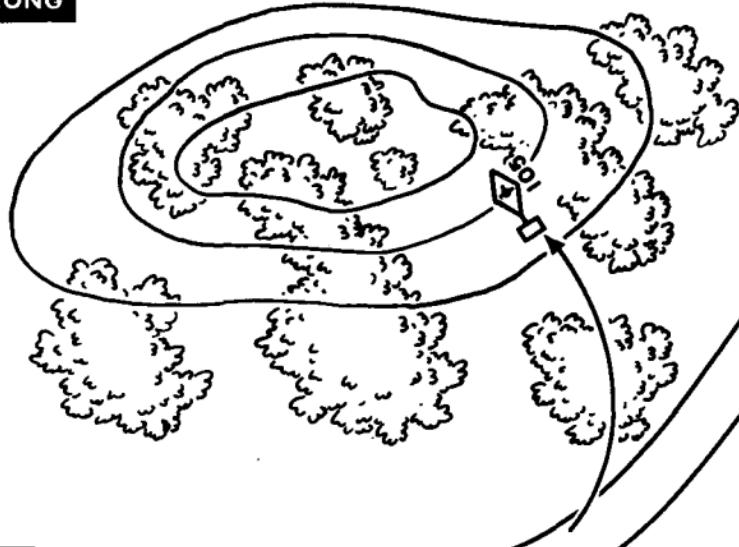
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Take advantage of concealment to move into position.

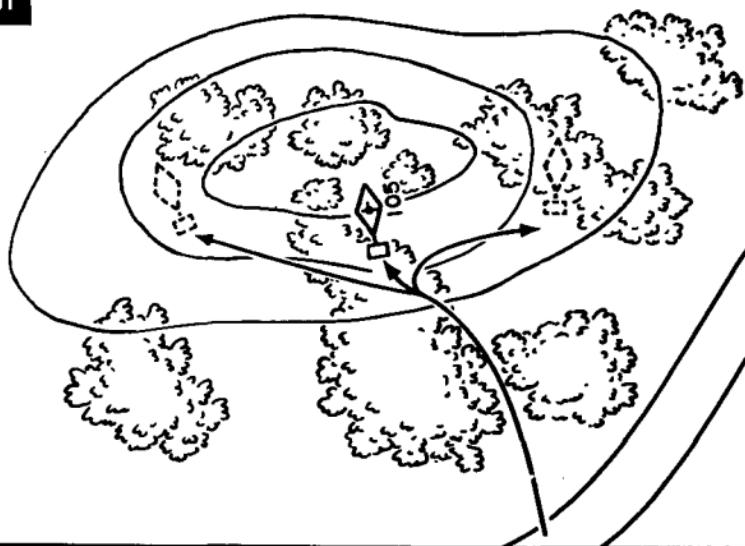
Figure 7. Movement to firing position.

WRONG



Do not select only one firing position.

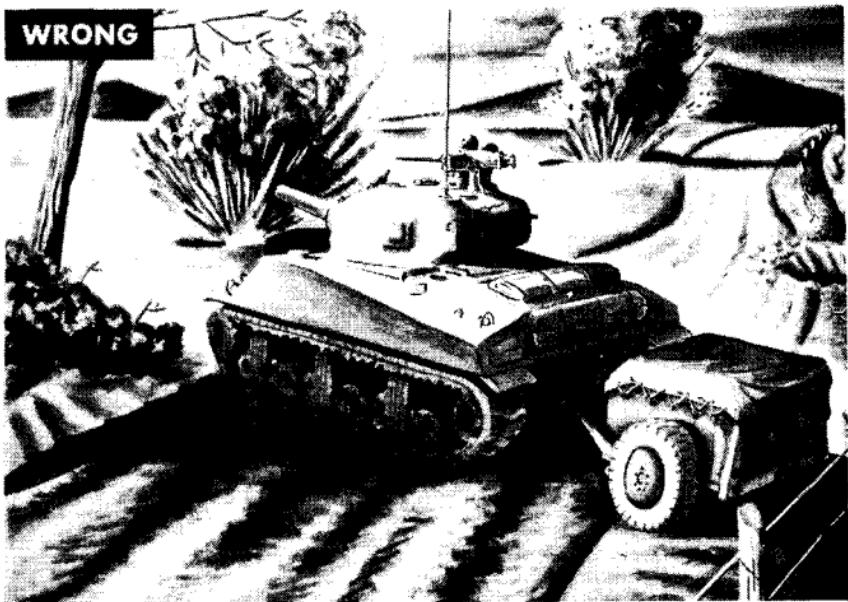
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Select one or more alternate firing positions.
Reconnoiter and mark routes to them.

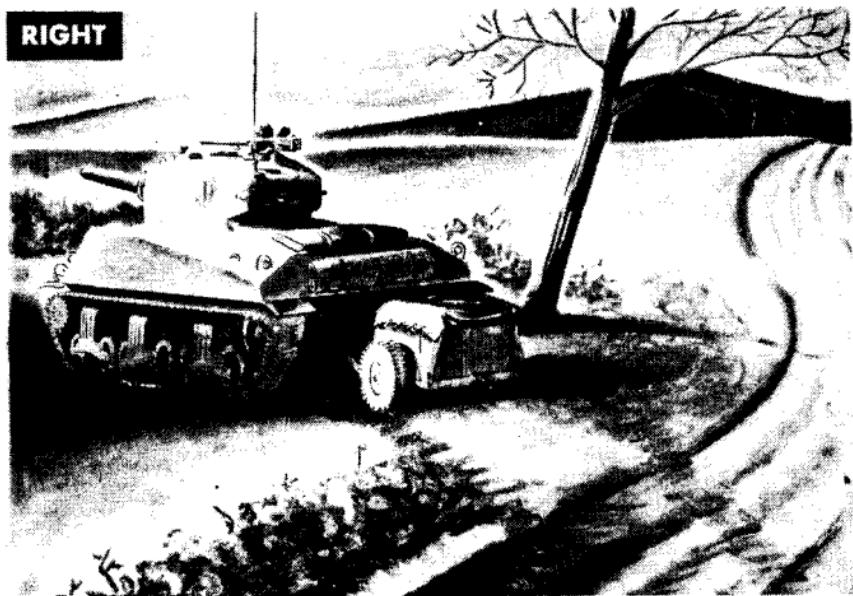
Figure 8. Alternate firing positions.

WRONG



In enemy surprise attack, do not open fire fight on road.

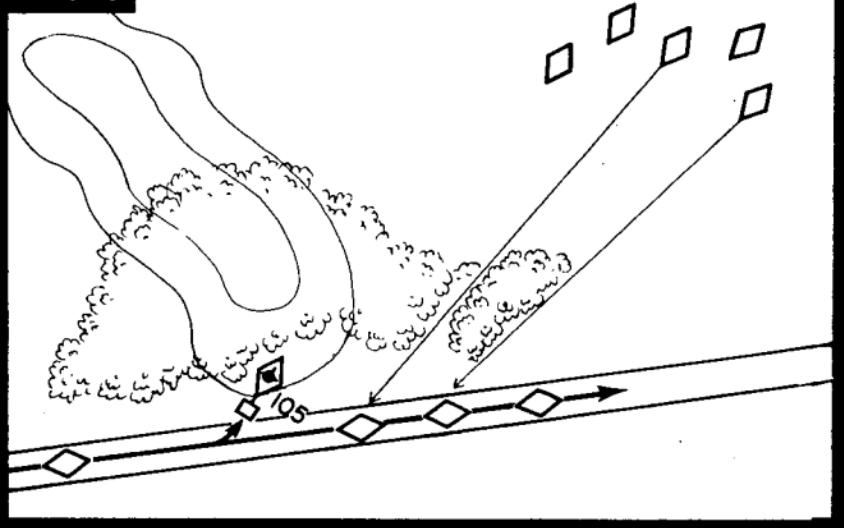
RIGHT



Move to hasty firing position and keep the road clear.

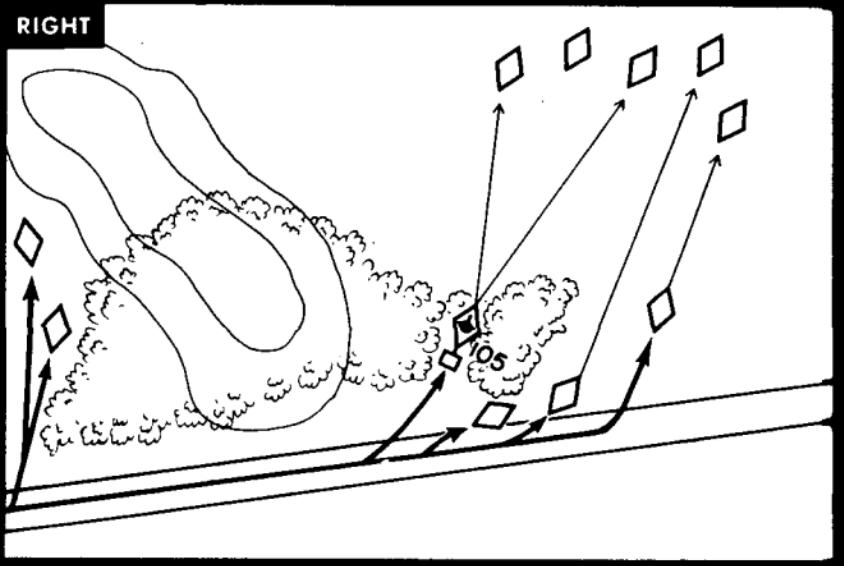
Figure 9. Hasty firing position.

WRONG



Do not wait for orders if enemy launches surprise attack'

RIGHT



Move at once to nearest position and open fire.

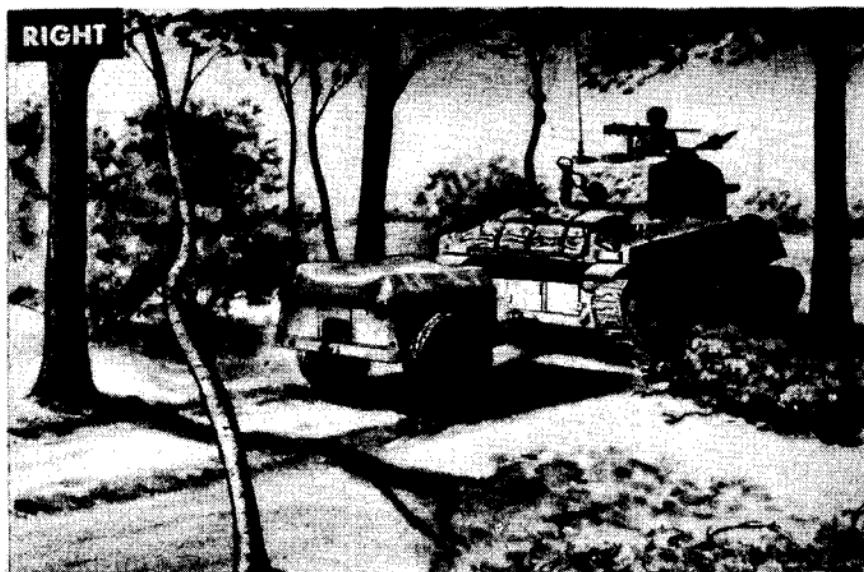
Figure 10. Hasty firing position.

WRONG



Do not occupy a position which requires extra movement to leave.

RIGHT



Select position from which move can be made to front
or rear without delay.

Figure 11. Firing position.

WRONG



Do not go into position in the open.

RIGHT



Use defilade, concealment, and camouflage.

Figure 12. Prepared firing positions.

(3) The *supplementary firing position* is that position from which the platoon or section fires on targets which cannot be reached from the primary or alternate position.

d. Each platoon and section leader makes as detailed a reconnaissance of the various firing positions as time permits. These positions may be classified as follows:

(1) *Hasty firing positions* are the closest available positions from which fire can be delivered immediately and accurately.

(2) *Prepared firing positions* are selected in advance of occupation during the platoon or section leader's reconnaissance. These positions require good fields of fire, adequate observation, cover, concealment, and covered routes of approach. Where no concealment is available, the positions should be dug in. Natural concealment is supplemented by camouflage. Additional ammunition, where possible, is dumped at the position.

e. **Observation posts.** (1) An observation post is a position selected to obtain a clear and extensive view of the zone of action from which fire can be controlled and directed.

(2) Alternate and supplementary observation posts are selected.

(3) An observation post should—

(a) Afford a commanding view of the terrain in the zone of action of the supported unit.

(b) Have good concealment and cover.

(c) Afford rapid establishment of communication.

(d) Be close to the line of fire.

(e) Have good avenues of approach and withdrawal.

11. RANGE ESTIMATION. A detailed discussion of range estimation methods and technique appears in

FM 17-12. Each section chief prepares a range card (see FM 17-12 and fig. 23).

12. TYPES OF TARGETS. a. Targets are primary, secondary, and emergency.

(1) *Primary targets* are those which must be destroyed to insure the success of the supported unit.

(2) *Secondary targets* are those which are engaged after the primary target has been destroyed.

(3) *Emergency targets* are those which are engaged by immediate fire when the supported troops or the security of the assault gun section or platoon is endangered.

b. Primary and secondary targets vary with the type of unit. The emergency target is the same for all units. The following are the primary, secondary, and emergency targets for assault guns supporting various units:

(1) *Assault guns supporting tank units* (fig. 13)–

(a) Primary targets—antitank guns or close-in artillery pieces.

(b) Secondary targets—infantry and infantry heavy weapons, such as machine guns or mortars; road blocks.

(c) Emergency targets—armored vehicles.

(2) *Assault guns supporting armored infantry* (fig. 14)–

(a) Primary targets—infantry heavy weapons.

(b) Secondary targets—groups of infantry.

(c) Emergency targets—armored vehicles; antitank guns, if they endanger the assault gun.

(3) Primary, secondary, and emergency targets of the assault guns of the mechanized cavalry reconnaissance squadron (fig. 15) in support of mounted patrols are the same as for tank unit assault guns. In support of dismounted patrols, they are the same as for armored infantry assault guns.

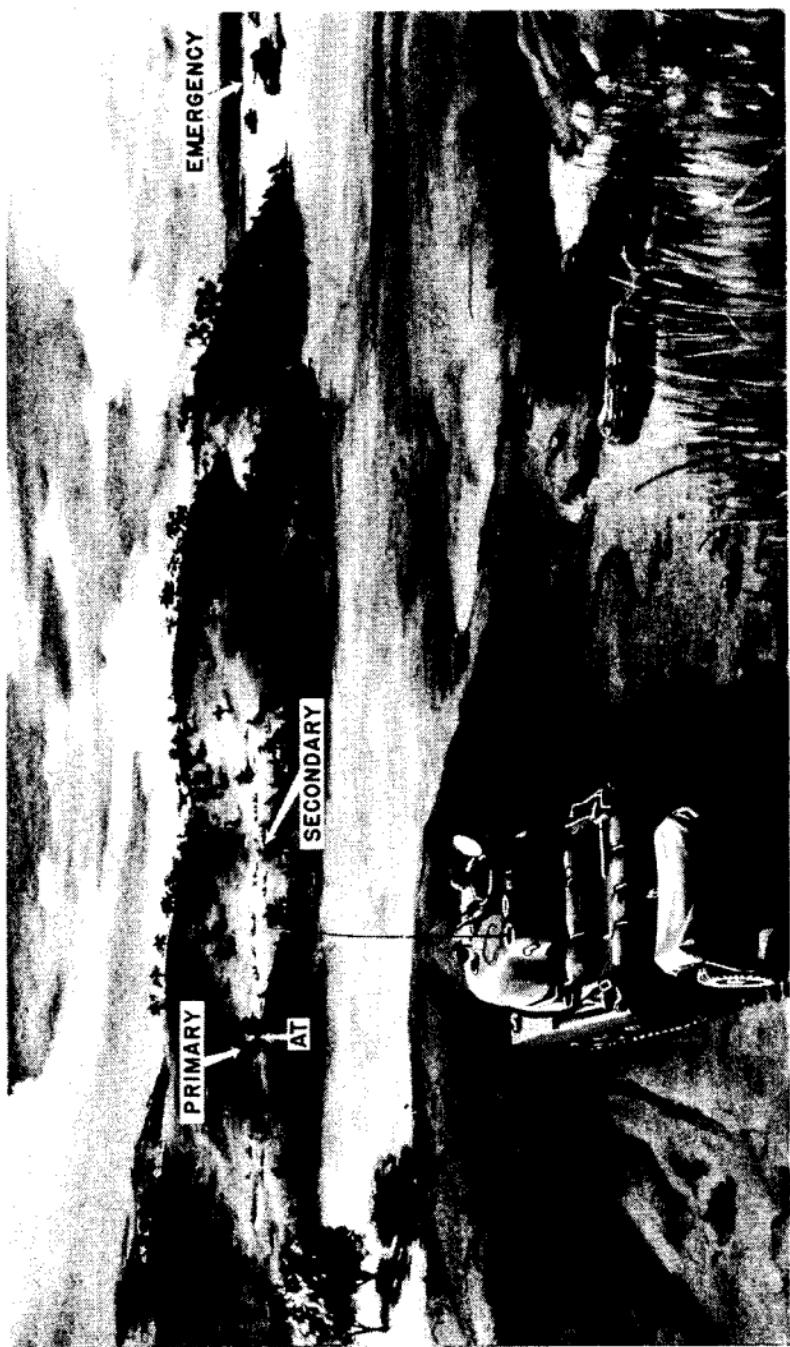


Figure 13. Targets of the assault gun section in the tank battalion.



Figure 14. Targets of the assault gun section, armored infantry battalion.



Figure 15. Targets of the assault gun section of the reconnaissance squadron.

13. FIRE ORDERS AND CARE AND CONSERVATION OF AMMUNITION. See FM 17-12 and figure 16.

14. SELECTION OF AMMUNITION. Three types of ammunition are normally carried — high explosive, HE AT, and smoke. High explosive is used against personnel and unarmored weapons. HE AT is used against armored vehicles and emplacements. Smoke is used to cover gaps in smoke screens, to mark targets, and for incendiary or casualty effect when white phosphorous is used. For characteristics of ammunition see FM 17-12 and TM 9-1900.

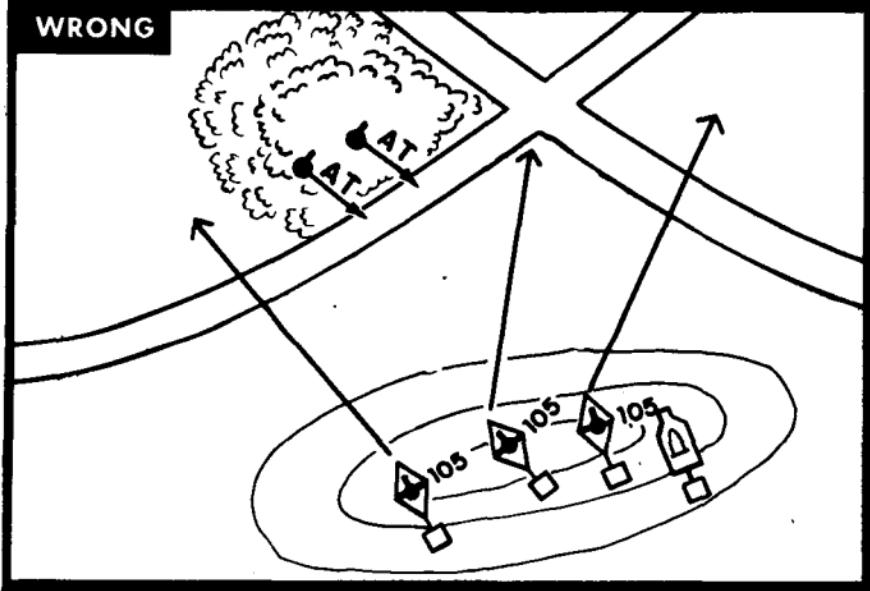
15. VEHICLE RECOGNITION. All members of assault gun units must be trained thoroughly in recognition of both friendly and enemy vehicles. For methods and technique see FM 21-80, FM 30-40, and pertinent training films and film strips.

16. COORDINATION OF FIRES. a. In both the offense and defense the fire of the assault gun platoon is coordinated with the plan of fires for other supporting weapons—artillery, tanks, tank destroyers, infantry heavy weapons. The platoon normally operates under direct control of the battalion commander and is used not only for planned fires but also to fire on targets of opportunity.

(1) In the offense, fires are coordinated so as to give continuous support to the attacking troops from the line of departure to the objective. When the objective is reached, supporting fires protect reorganization and assist in repelling counterattacks.

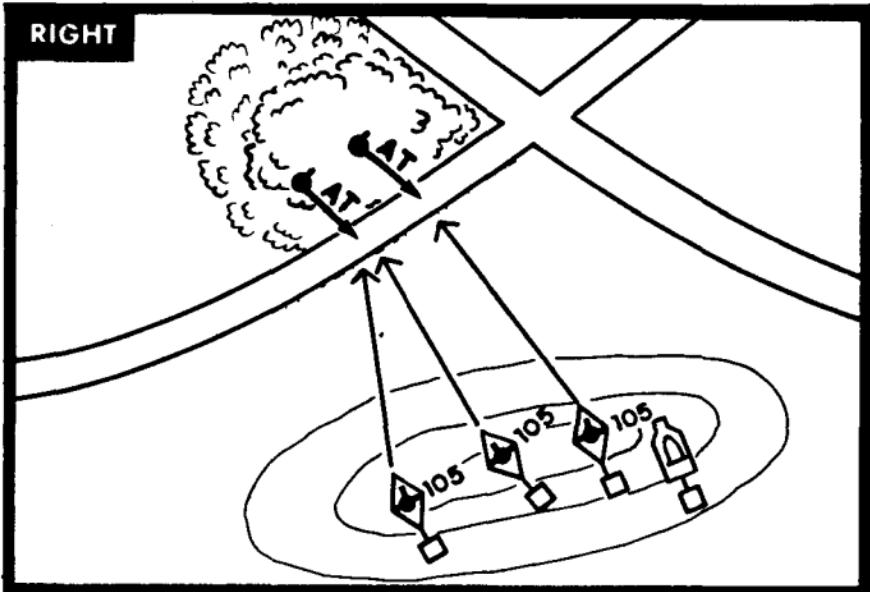
(2) In defense, the assault gun platoon fires give support to the main line of resistance and to counterattacking forces.

WRONG



Do not fire at general targets.

RIGHT



Fire at point targets and destroy them.

Figure 16. Assault gun target.

b. The platoon leader assigns specific fire missions and definite sectors of fire to each gun section. Usually, the whole platoon will be sighted to cover one primary sector of fire while individual guns are given secondary sectors. During action, the platoon leader coordinates the fires of the gun sections so that the most effective fire may be obtained. The platoon leader is in continuous radio communication with the battalion commander in order that he may receive promptly any new fire missions. He continuously observes his sector of fire and does not hesitate to bring fire upon any suitable target that presents itself unless he has received prior instructions not to fire on such targets. Similarly, the section leader keeps in constant radio communication with the platoon leader and observes his assigned sector for targets of opportunity.

Chapter 3

MARCHES

17. MARCH FORMATION. FM 25-10 and FM 17-50 cover marches in detail. The march formation of the assault gun platoon and troop follows generally those prescribed for other units of the command. The ammunition section usually follows the gun sections.

18. MOVEMENT IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE ENEMY. During movement in close proximity of the enemy, the platoon leader may move in his half-track with battalion headquarters. He keeps abreast of the situation and is prepared to make recommendations for the employment of the platoon when requested. Figures 17 to 22 depict conduct on the march.

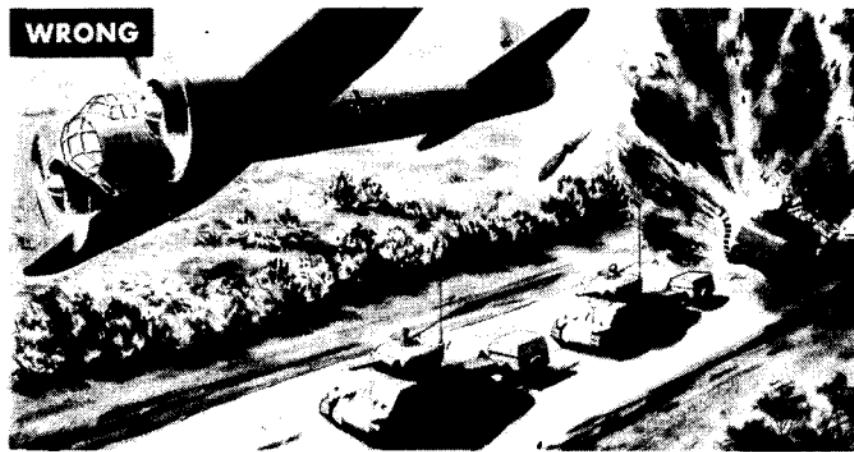
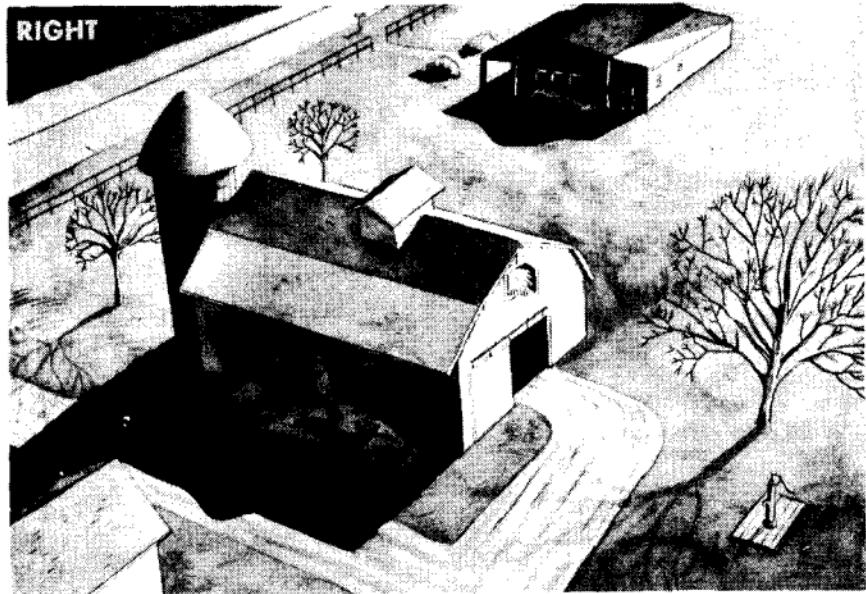
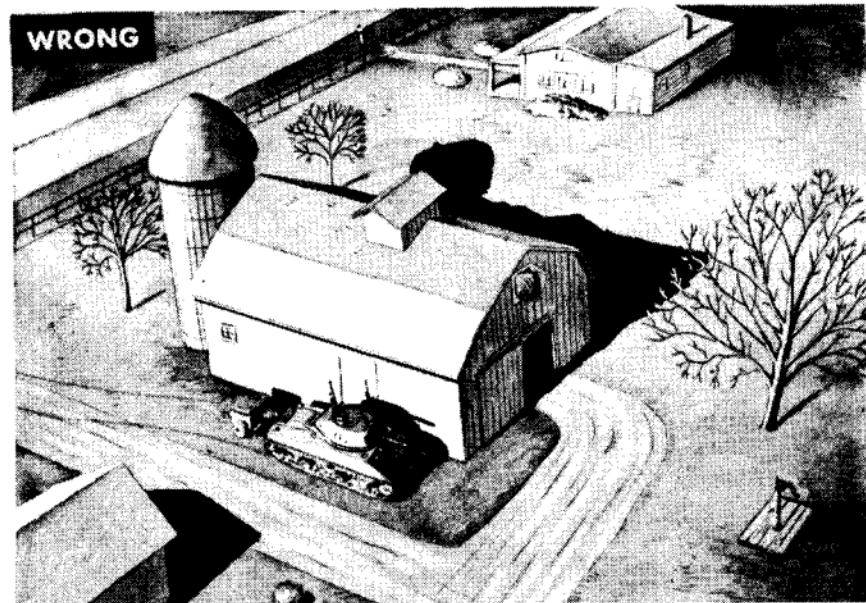


Figure 17. Do not close up assault gun section on roads during halts, thereby offering a good air target. Halt with proper march distance in order not to present a massed target.



Halt vehicle in the shadow of the building.



Do not let the movement of the shadow expose the vehicle.

Figure 18. Conduct at the halt.



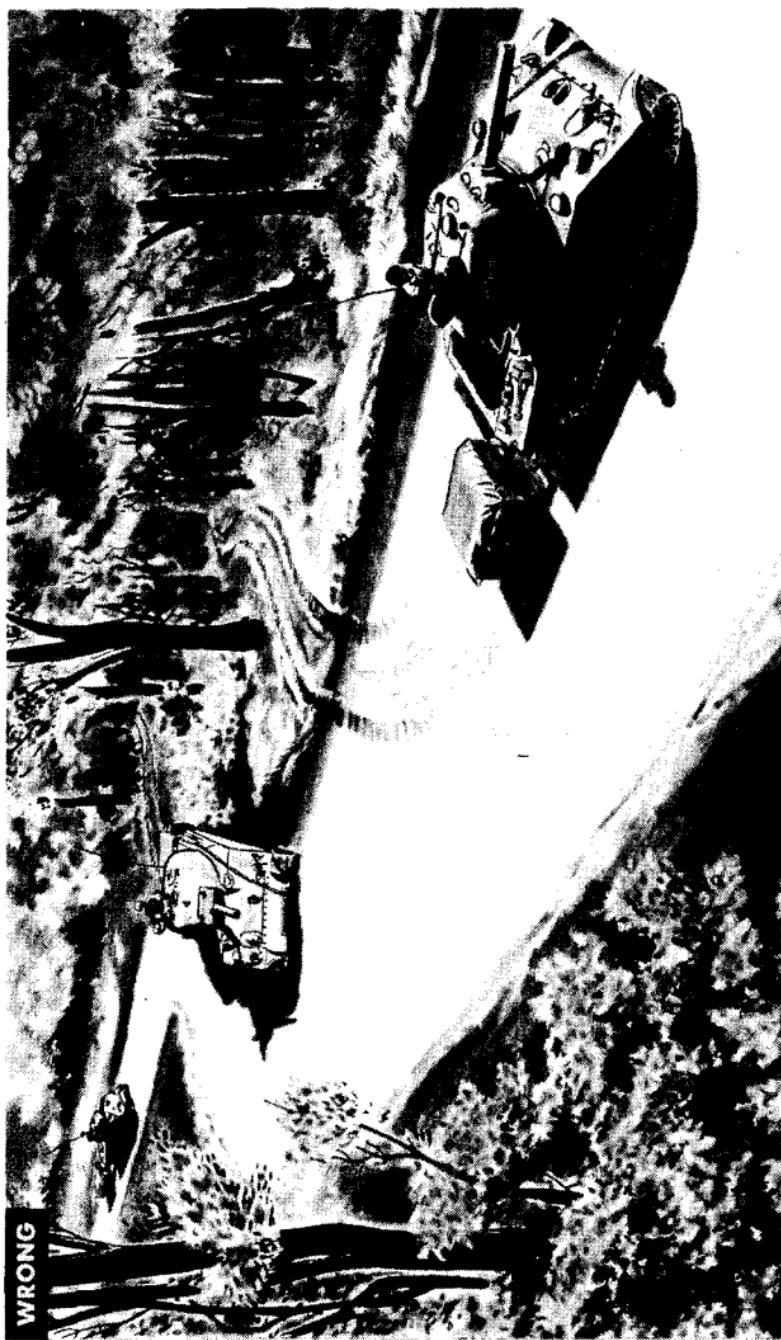
Use shadow of trees when halted.

Figure 19a. Concealment from the air at the halt.



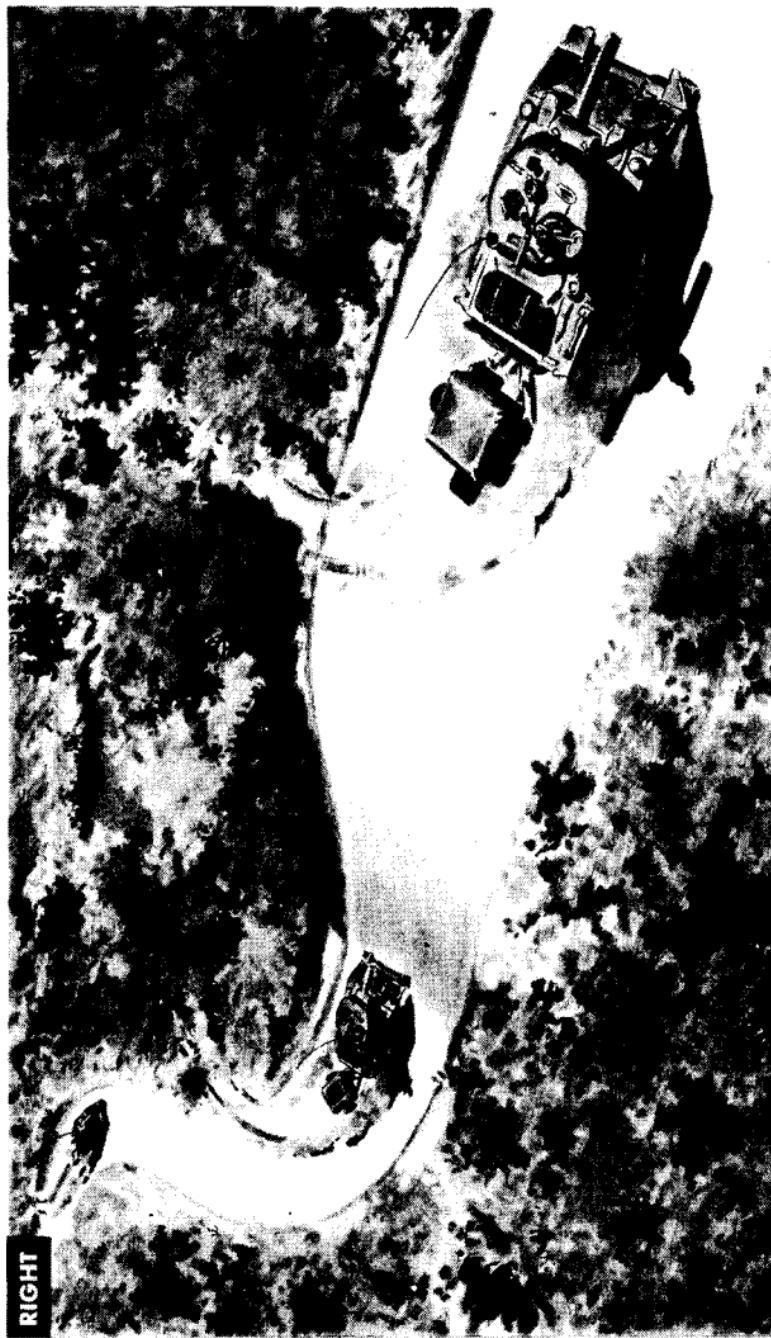
Halt in shade or move into woods.

Figure 19b. Concealment from the air at the halt.



Do not form on road and wait for signal to move forward.

Figure 20a. Method of re-forming column after a halt.



Move directly from concealment to place in column and keep moving.

Figure 20b. Method of re-forming column after a halt.

Figure 21. If concealment is not available, move off road and disperse.





Figure 22a. Duties of crew during halts. Do not allow crew to go to sleep.



Figure 22b. *Remain alert. Have air and ground sentinel on duty; crews perform proper duties.*

Chapter 4

BIVOUACS

19. GENERAL. Bivouac areas normally are designated by higher commanders. They are selected to provide concealment, natural protection, good standing for the vehicles, and adequate avenues for egress. Troops are arranged within the bivouac area so that they can move out readily in the proper order of march without passing through the area of another company.

20. DISPOSITION IN BIVOUAC. The assault gun platoon normally is given an area within that of headquarters company. However, it is placed so as to facilitate the planning of supporting fires to be laid upon likely avenues of enemy approach.

21. BIVOUAC DEFENSE. a. Upon completing movement into his area the platoon leader takes necessary local security measures, causes necessary maintenance, ammunition replenishment, and refueling to be started, and reports to the battalion commander for orders. The platoon is used in the bivouac defense plan to cover favorable avenues of approach for enemy troops. After learning of the plans for defense the platoon leader gives the situation to platoon and—

- (1) Selects primary, alternate, and supplementary positions.
- (2) Reconnoiters routes to the positions.
- (3) Causes range cards and firing data to be prepared for each position.

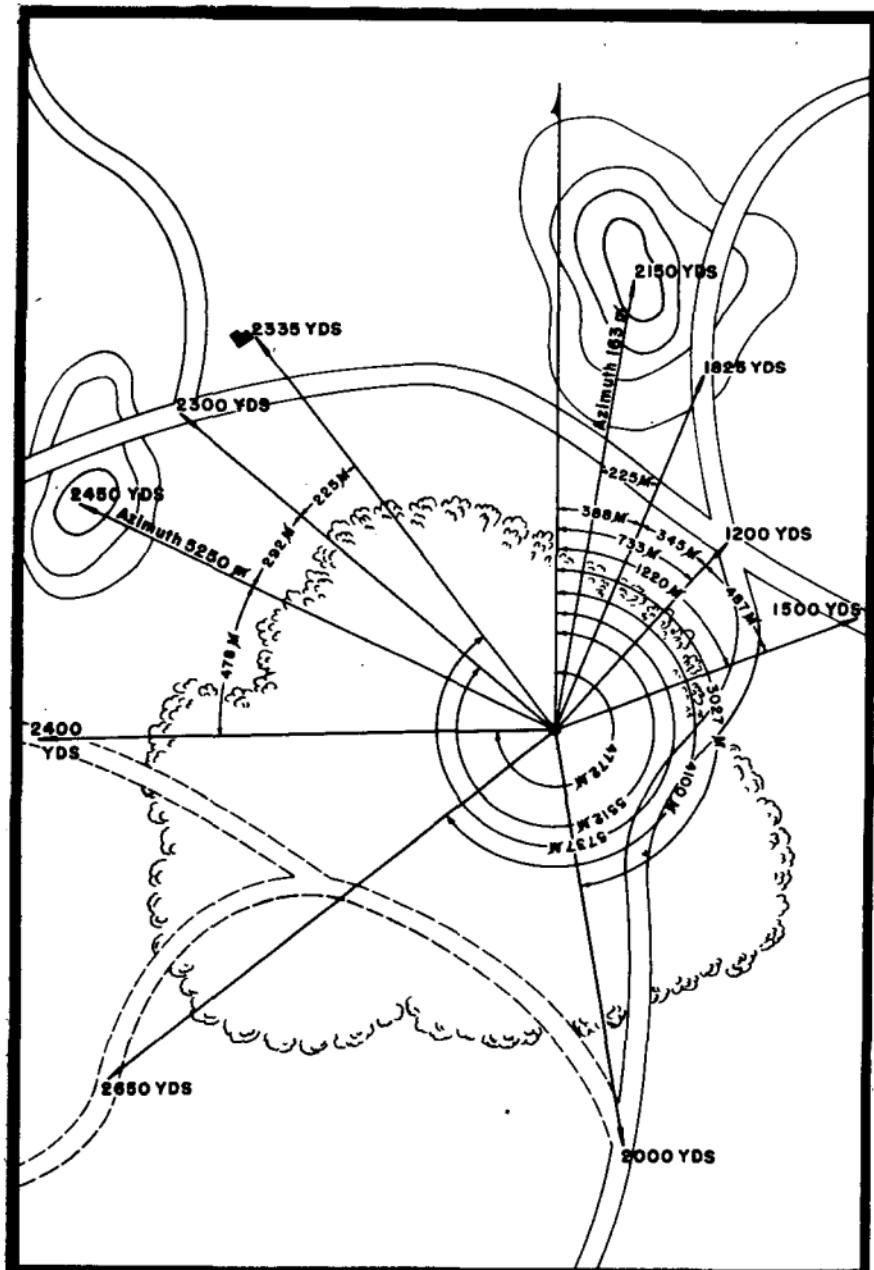


Figure 23. Range card for protection of bivouac.

- (4) Causes necessary security measures to be taken—posts air and ground observers, contacts adjacent units, takes advantage of security afforded by other units, calls upon battalion commander for additional security details as needed, causes prone shelters or fox holes to be dug, inspects camouflage measures.
- (5) Causes maintenance duties to be completed.
- (6) Arranges for signals to warn of enemy approach and gives complete instructions for action in case of bivouac attack.
- (7) Gives details as to messing.
- (8) Sends overlay of dispositions and targets together with range cards to battalion commander.
- (9) Tells platoon the location of his own and the bat-

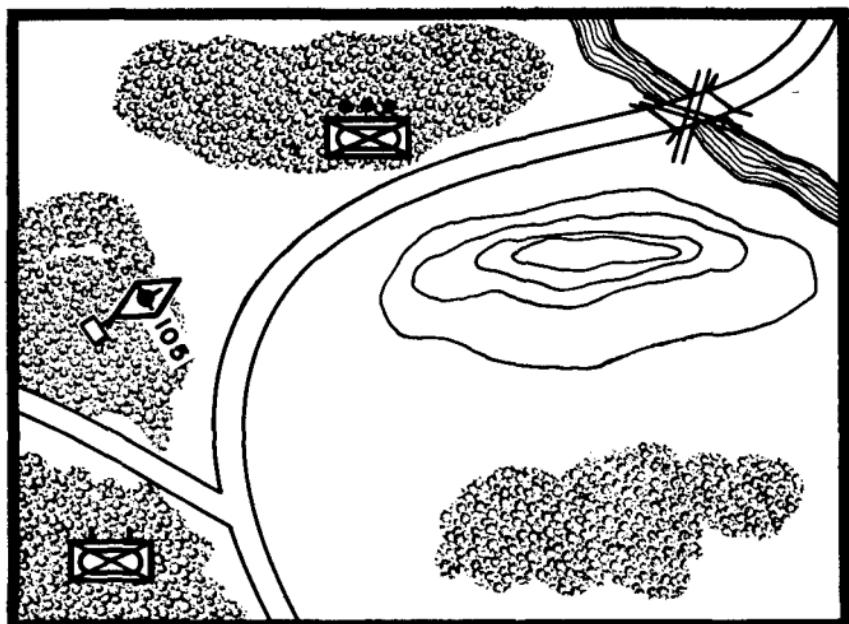


Figure 24. Assault gun section attached to infantry platoon acting as outpost for armored infantry battalion in bivouac.

talion command posts and keeps one man awake at CP at all times.

(10) Inspects dispositions frequently and enforces security, camouflage, and blackout measures.

b. As part of a bivouac outpost the platoon is used in direct support of the outpost to cover favorable avenues for enemy approach and to cover road blocks and other obstacles. The platoon may be used as a unit to mass its fires. Less frequently, sections will be used alone. Action of the platoon leader and the platoon is similar to that taken in a. above.

Chapter 5

SECURITY

22. GENERAL. Security embraces all measures taken by a command to protect itself against annoyance, surprise, and observation by the enemy. Each commander is responsible for the security of his command. The superior commander prescribes security measures for the protection of the command as a whole. Subordinate commanders provide such additional security as is required for their own local protection. The measures adapted are appropriate to the hostile threat. As the danger becomes greater, security measures are increased.

23. LOCAL AND INDIVIDUAL SECURITY. a. Individual security. See FM 21-75 and FM 5-15.

b. Local security. (1) The security of the vehicle and crew is the responsibility of the vehicle commander. The security of his section is his paramount concern at all times.

(2) Security is obtained by—

(a) Posting observers to warn of hostile ground or air attack.

(b) Keeping some guns manned at all times.

(c) Placing vehicles and siting guns for all-around defense.

(d) Concealment and camouflage.

(e) Use of fox holes or prone shelters.

(3) When all sections of the platoon are in the same area, the riflemen in platoon headquarters and the am-

munition handlers in the ammunition section are used to aid in the local ground security.

24. SECURITY ON THE MARCH (fig. 25). a. During the march, the platoon-

- (1) Takes and maintains proper distances between vehicles.
- (2) Keeps radio silence if ordered.
- (3) Keeps receivers of all vehicles to proper frequency in order to receive early information of air or ground attack.
- b. Vehicle commanders or designated individuals observe constantly, keeping alert for ground or air attack.
- c. Gunners are alert and ready to deliver fire instantly.

25. SECURITY AT THE HALT. a. **Temporary halts during the march.** (1) Vehicles are moved off the road and into concealment if practicable.

- (2) Vehicles are dispersed and positions occupied which allow them to move out without backing.
- (3) Guns are pointed for all-around defense.
- (4) One man remains with the assault gun.
- (5) One man remains with leader's radio.
- (6) Necessary dismounted men are posted to the front, flanks, and rear for ground protection.
- (7) Air and ground observers are posted.
- (8) A guide is posted near roads to receive signals.

b. **Halts of long or indefinite duration, assembly areas.** (1) Vehicles are dispersed at least 50 yards apart, preferably more.

- (2) Guns are sited for all-around defense.
- (3) One man is kept alert in each vehicle.

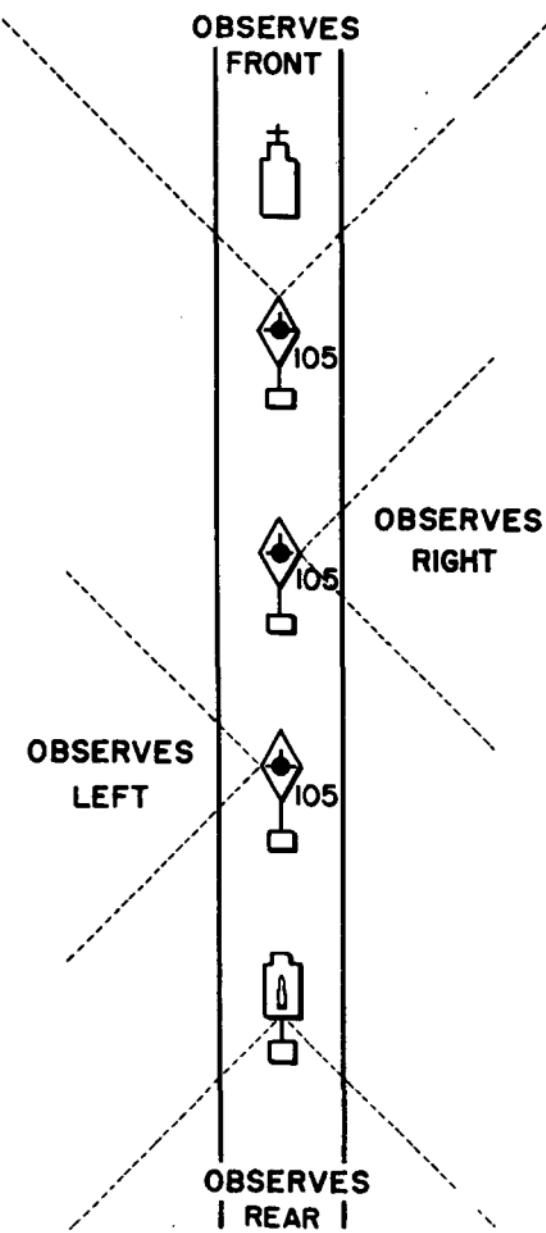


Figure 25. Security on the march. Air and ground observation is continuous. Antiaircraft guns are given sectors of fire.

(4) Ground and air security is established and guides posted.

(5) Each crew digs fox holes or prone shelters in vicinity of their vehicles.

(6) Necessary camouflage and concealment measures are established.

26. SECURITY IN THE BIVOUAC. Security in the bivouac follows the rules laid down for security at the halt and defense of the bivouac.

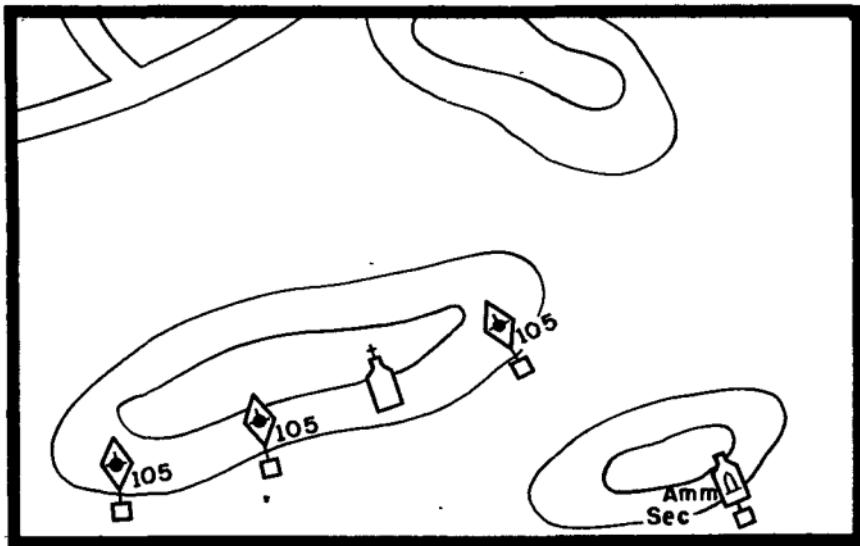
27. SECURITY IN THE FIRING POSITION (fig. 26).

In addition to the local security measures put into effect by each vehicle commander the platoon leader uses personnel and vehicles of the headquarters and the ammunition section for flank and rear protection. Some riflemen in platoon headquarters may be used to give local protection to the forward observer during the firing of indirect missions. Maximum advantage is taken of security afforded by adjacent units.

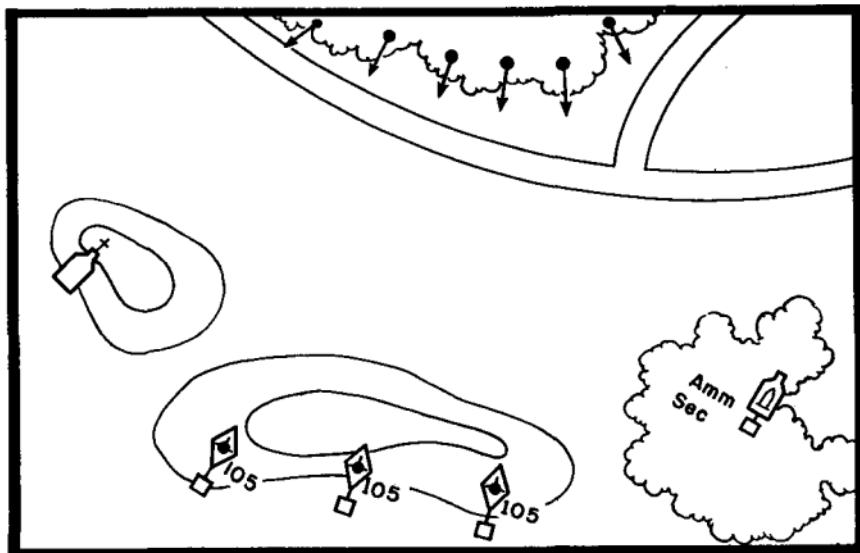
28. SECURITY DETACHMENTS. a. Advance guards. See paragraph 30.

b. Covering detachment. The assault gun platoon or section with a covering detachment moves by bounds from firing position to firing position to give fire support as needed. The platoon leader or section leader keeps in constant touch by radio with the covering force commander. When the platoon acts as a unit, advance may be made by alternate or successive bounds, one section always being in position to give support.

c. Rear guard. As part of the rear guard, the assault gun platoon usually will be with the support. A section may be with the rear party. Long range fire is used to cause the enemy to deploy. Also fire is used to block



The ammunition section covering the rear of the platoon and the flanks of the platoon position by fire (when necessary).



Ammunition section covering right flank of the platoon in a firing position. The area masked by the woods is brought under observation.

Figure 26. Security in the firing position.

defiles. Should the rear guard be forced to deploy, the assault gun platoon gives it close fire support and assists its withdrawal. In assisting in withdrawal, the platoon usually will withdraw by section in order that at least one gun will always be in firing position. The platoon leader keeps in close radio or personal touch with the unit to which his platoon is attached.

d. Flank guard (fig. 27). When attached to a flank guard, the assault gun platoon is used to assist in defending road blocks and other obstacles and to give fire support to the flank guard in an attack or in a delaying position. In a large flank guard the platoon will usually be employed as a unit. In a small flank guard or when the flank guard is divided into several parties, the platoon usually operates by section, one section with each party.

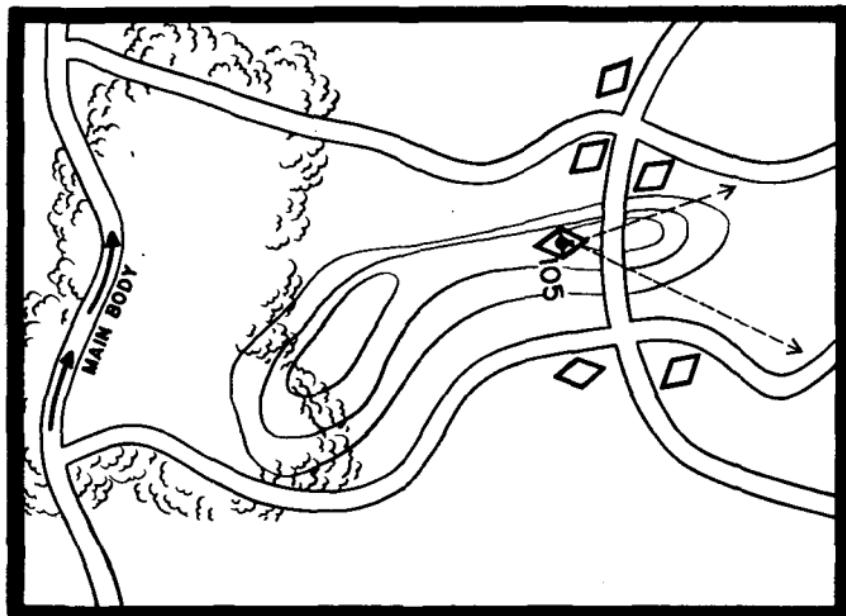


Figure 27. Assault gun section with a tank platoon as a flank guard. Flank guard establishing a temporary road block until main body has cleared critical point. The assault gun covers sector of both tank sections if terrain permits.

Chapter 6

OFFENSIVE ACTION

29. GENERAL. The purpose of offensive action is the destruction of the hostile forces. In offensive action the assault gun section and platoon make use of their armor-protected fire power and mobility to furnish continuous close fire support to the supported unit. The sections and platoon are employed primarily against point and small area targets at close ranges using direct and indirect fire.

30. MEETING ENGAGEMENT. a. A meeting engagement is a collision between two opposing forces enroute (FM 100-5). In a meeting engagement the advance guard is employed to give the main body time and space to deploy. As reconnaissance reports enemy activity and as the advance guard draws near to the enemy it deploys on a broad front.

b. The assault gun platoon with the advance guard usually marches with the support. A section may be with the advance party. The fire of assault guns is used to cause the enemy to deploy and to give close support to the advance guard as in the attack or defense. It is used to reinforce the base of fire. (Figures 28 to 30 cover action of assault guns in support of the advance guard.)

31. ASSAULT GUNS WITH RECONNAISSANCE UNITS. For use of assault guns with mechanized cavalry units see FM 2-20 and FM 2-30. These assault guns support reconnaissance platoons and patrols. Figures 31 to 33 depict their action.

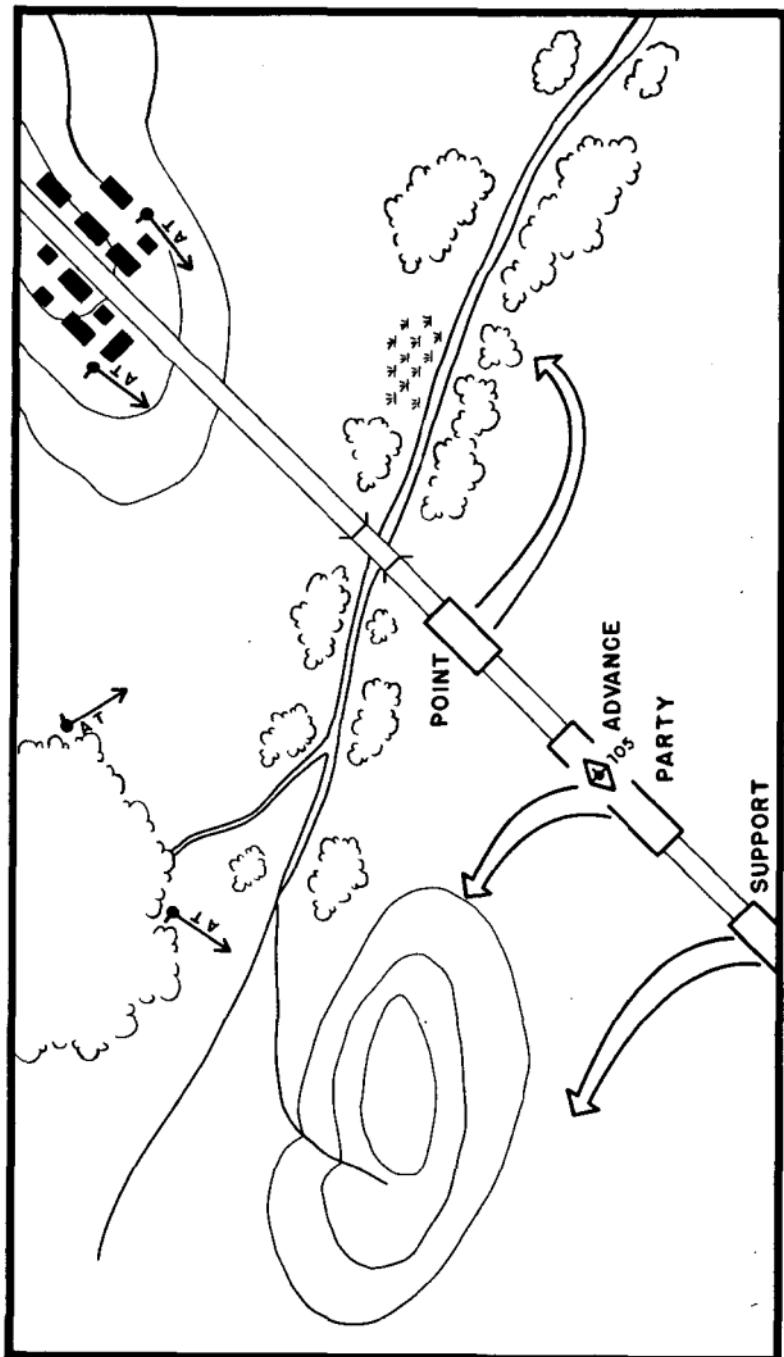


Figure 28. Tank company assault gun section with the advance party. Assault gun sections move promptly to positions from which to support the advance party action.

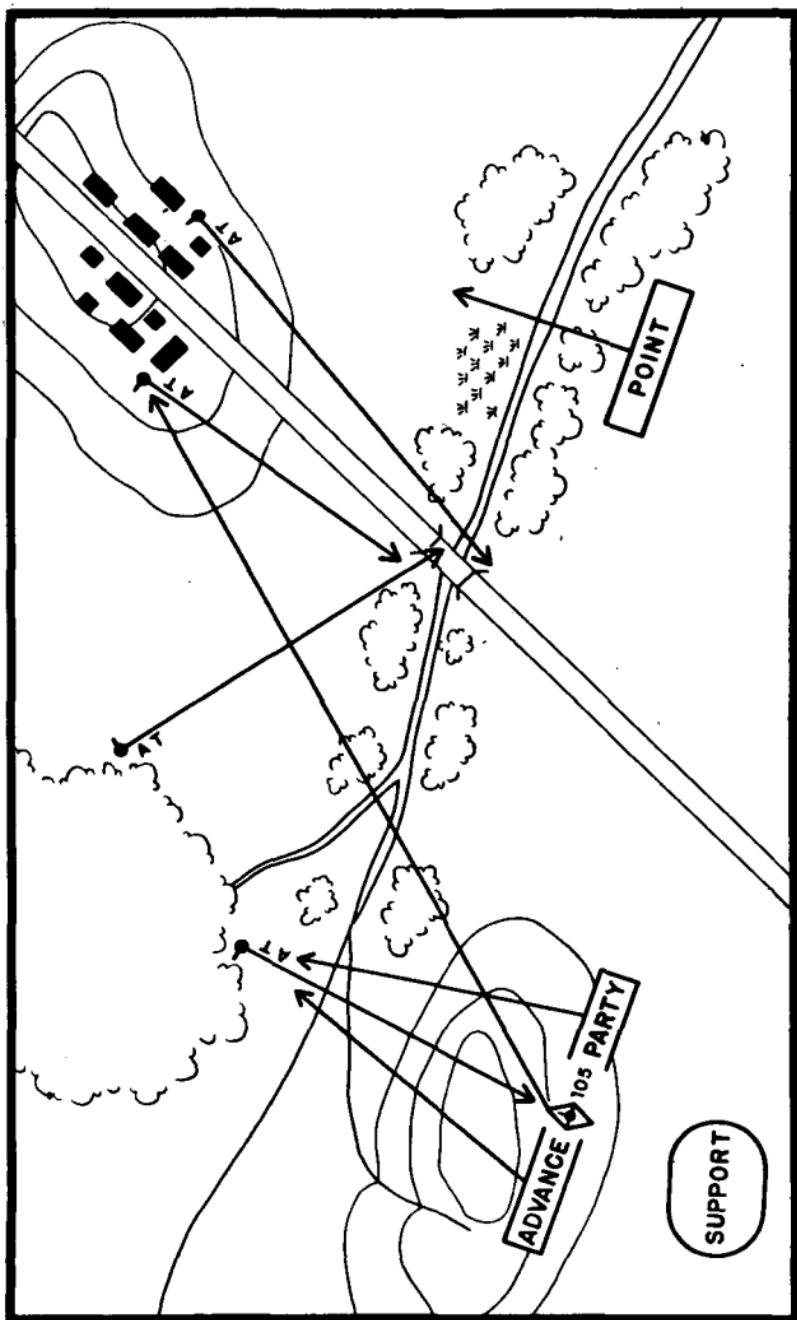


Figure 29. Action of the assault gun section as a part of the advance party.

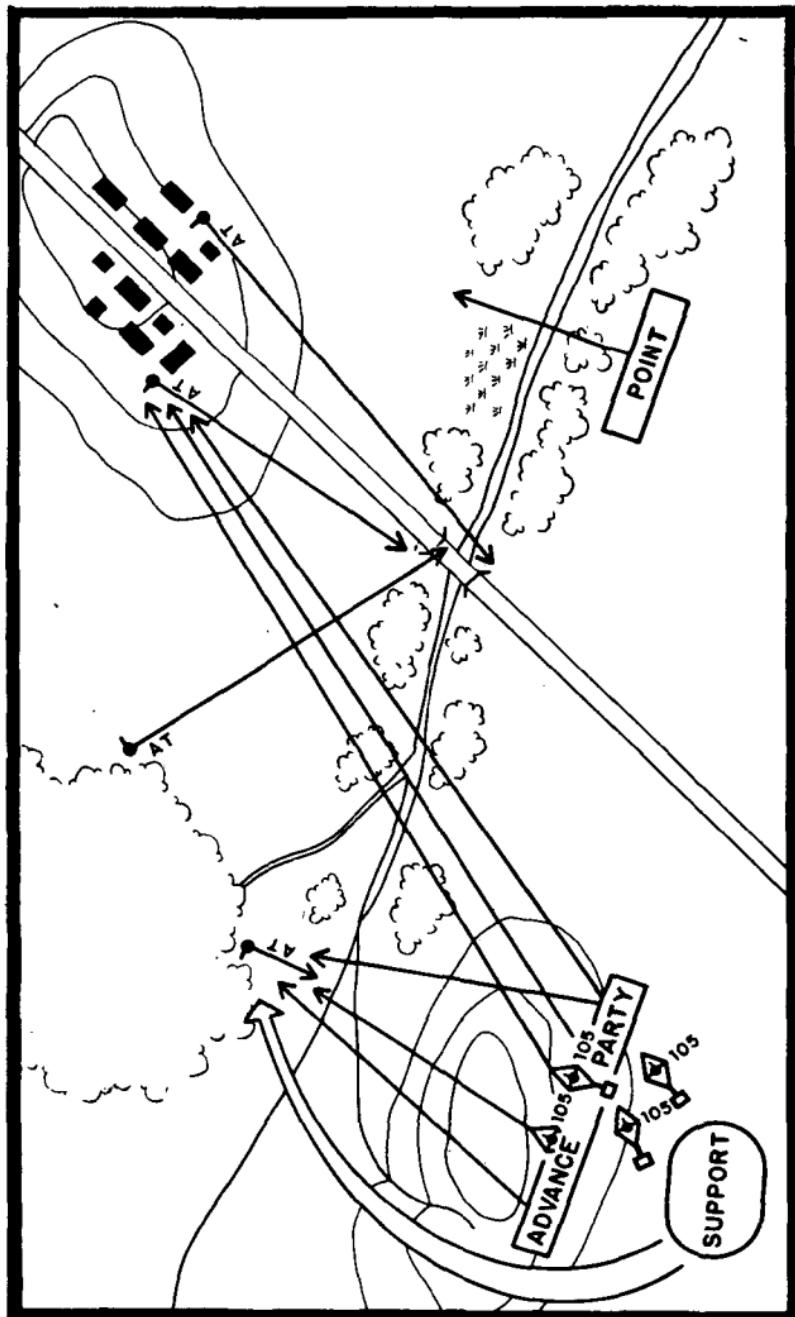
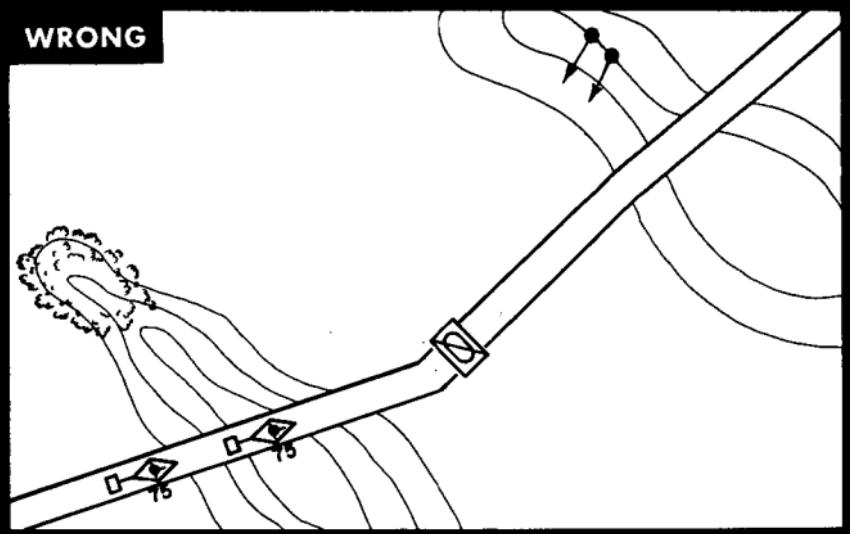


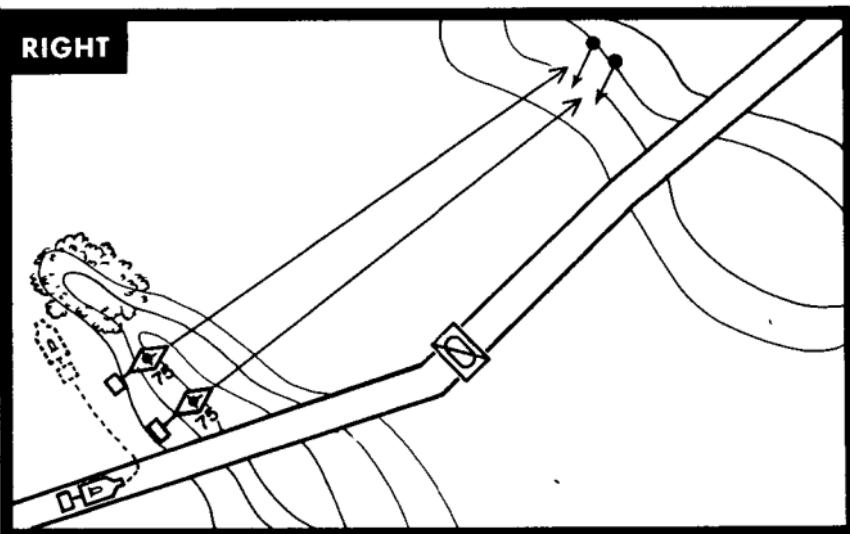
Figure 30. Action of the assault gun platoon and section in support of an advance guard.

WRONG



Do not leave assault guns idle while armored reconnaissance cars advance in open.

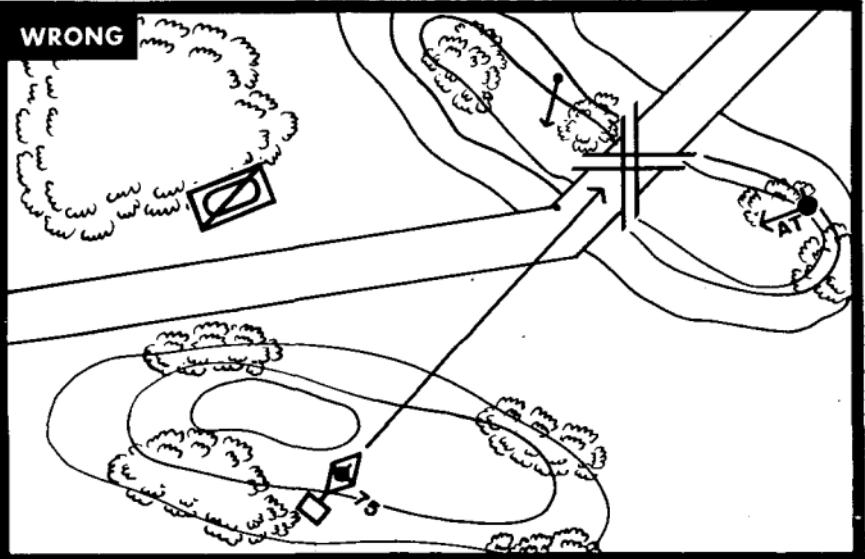
RIGHT



Put assault guns in position to support advance by fire.

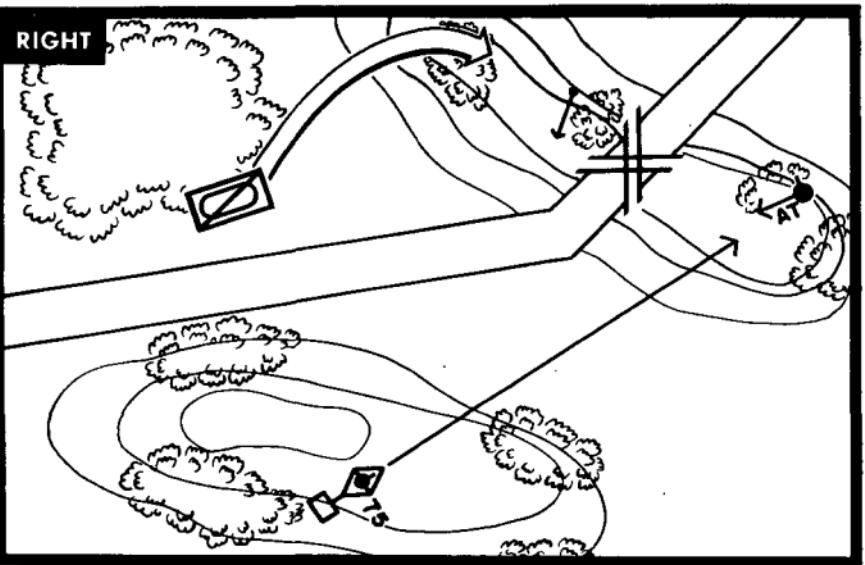
Figure 31. Assault gun platoon of the cavalry reconnaissance squadron supporting a reconnaissance patrol.

WRONG



Do not shoot at the barricade or machine gun if reconnaissance patrol makes a mounted attack.

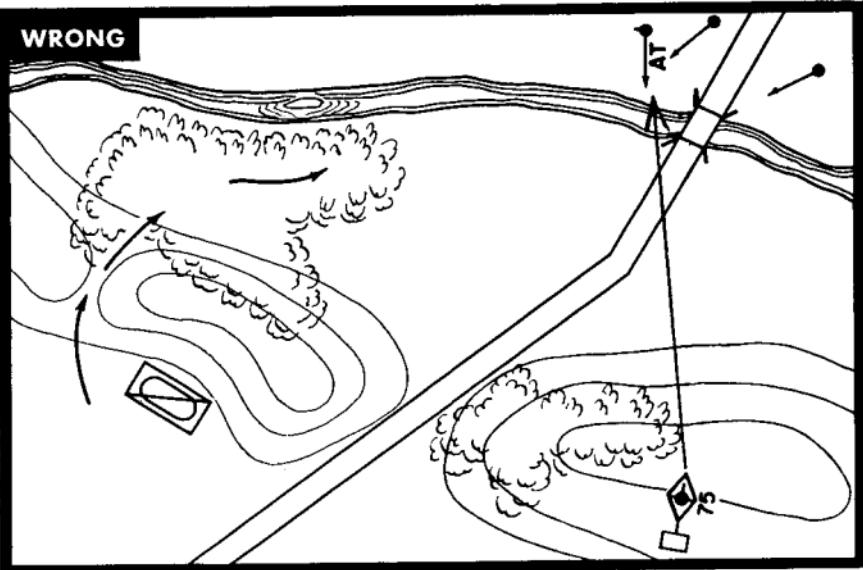
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Knock out antitank gun. Armored reconnaissance cars fire and maneuver to knock out machine gun and defending riflemen.

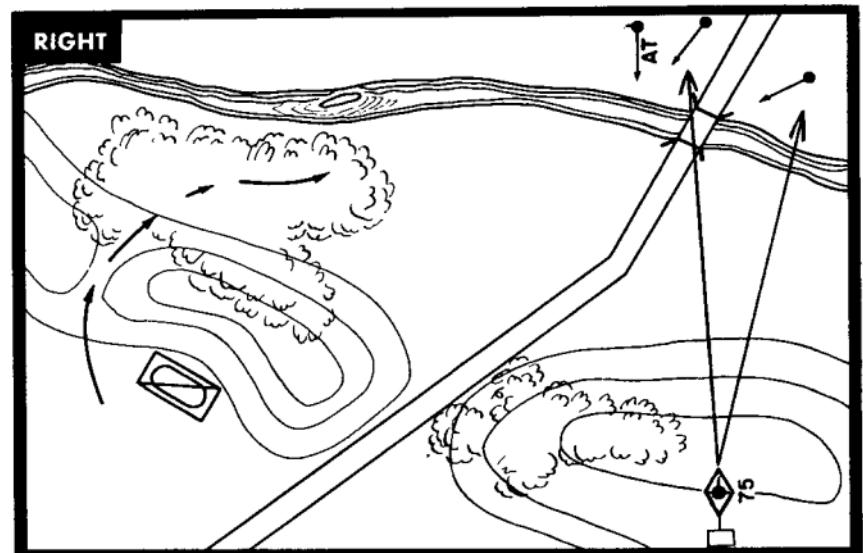
Figure 32. Assault gun sections reinforcing a mounted reconnaissance patrol.

WRONG



Do not shoot at antitank gun in support of dismounted attack.

RIGHT



Knock out the machine guns. They are a threat to dismounted troops.
Avoid hitting bridge.

Figure 33. Assault gun section reinforcing a dismounted reconnaissance patrol.

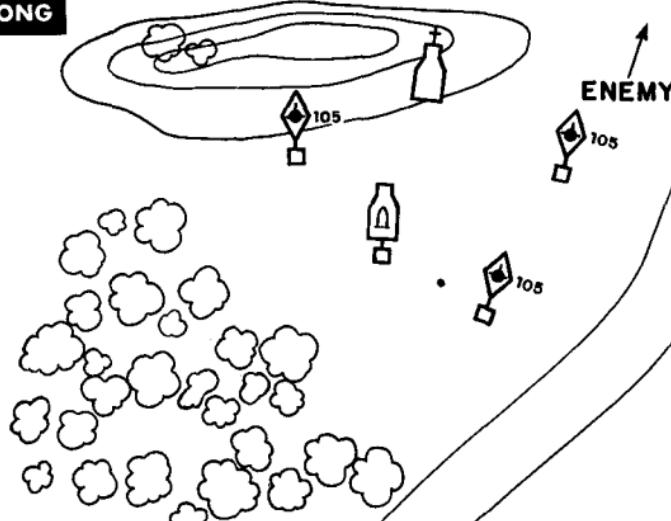
32. PREPARATION FOR THE ATTACK. a. Except in a meeting engagement, troops will usually occupy an assembly area while plans for the attack are being made and orders issued. The assault gun platoon assembles with the battalion. It may be conducted to the assembly area by the senior section leader while the platoon leader reports for orders. In the assembly area, security measures are taken (figures 34 and 35), vehicles are inspected and refueled, ammunition is checked and replenished if necessary, and all possible means are taken to make the platoon ready for combat.

b. In preparation for the attack the platoon leader—

- (1) Receives initial instructions from the battalion commander.
- (2) Reconnoiters for positions and routes thereto.
- (3) Studies map to determine possible subsequent positions and routes thereto.
- (4) Makes detailed plans for employment of his platoon.
- (5) Presents plans to the commander.
- (6) Makes such changes in plans as are directed.
- (7) Gives detailed orders to the platoon.
- (8) When time permits, has each section leader reconnoiter his primary position.
- (9) Checks platoon's readiness for combat.
- (10) Reports to the commander when ready.

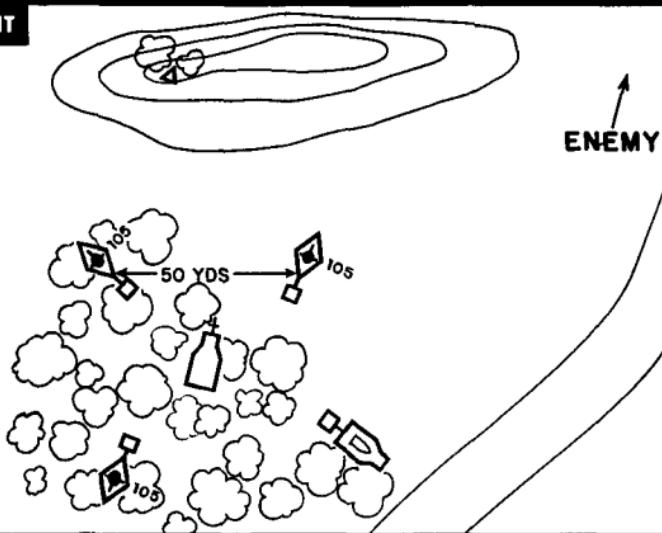
33. MOVEMENT TO FIRING POSITIONS. a. The platoon must be in position and ready to fire when the attack starts. If direct laying is to be used, assault guns are moved to defilade near the position to be occupied and moved into position at the proper time. If indirect laying methods are to be used, guns must be placed in position and data calculated. Great care must be exer-

WRONG



Do not assemble vehicles in open.

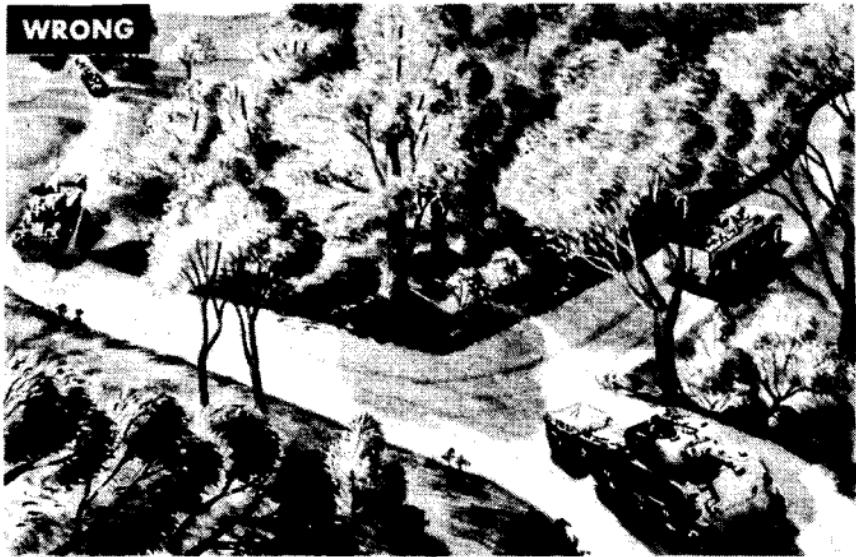
RIGHT



Take advantage of nearby concealment.

Figure 34. Assembly area should provide concealment.

WRONG



Do not move into assembly area and hope other vehicles will follow.

RIGHT



Post guide from leading vehicles to insure that remainder of platoon follows.

Figure 35. Post guides when entering an assembly area.

cised to prevent disclosure of the positions to the enemy prior to the attack.

b. When movement to firing positions is protected by security detachments of other units, the platoon may move directly to positions without regard to the assault units. If such is not the case, the platoon follows the assault companies.

c. When the battalion advances in deployed formation the platoon moves within the formation as directed by the battalion commander. It is prepared to go into position and fire at once. It may be required to support the covering force.

34. CONDUCT OF THE ATTACK. **a. Assault gun section, medium tank company.** During the attack the assault gun section of the medium tank company, under the direction of the company commander, moves where it can best support the attack by fire. This is usually between the assault platoons and the support platoons or with the support platoons, depending on availability of suitable defiladed firing positions. The section leader keeps in constant radio communication with the company commander. He fires on targets as directed by the company commander and in addition constantly observes the zone of advance for targets. He immediately brings fire upon any suitable target he observes.

b. Assault gun platoon of the tank battalion. (1) The assault gun platoon of the tank battalion initially supports by indirect laying if time for preparation of data is available. The platoon goes into position at the latest practicable moment. Sections may be halted in rear of positions and go into position only when targets are discovered. The platoon leader keeps in constant touch with the battalion commander and the gun sections. He constantly observes the battalion zone of action for

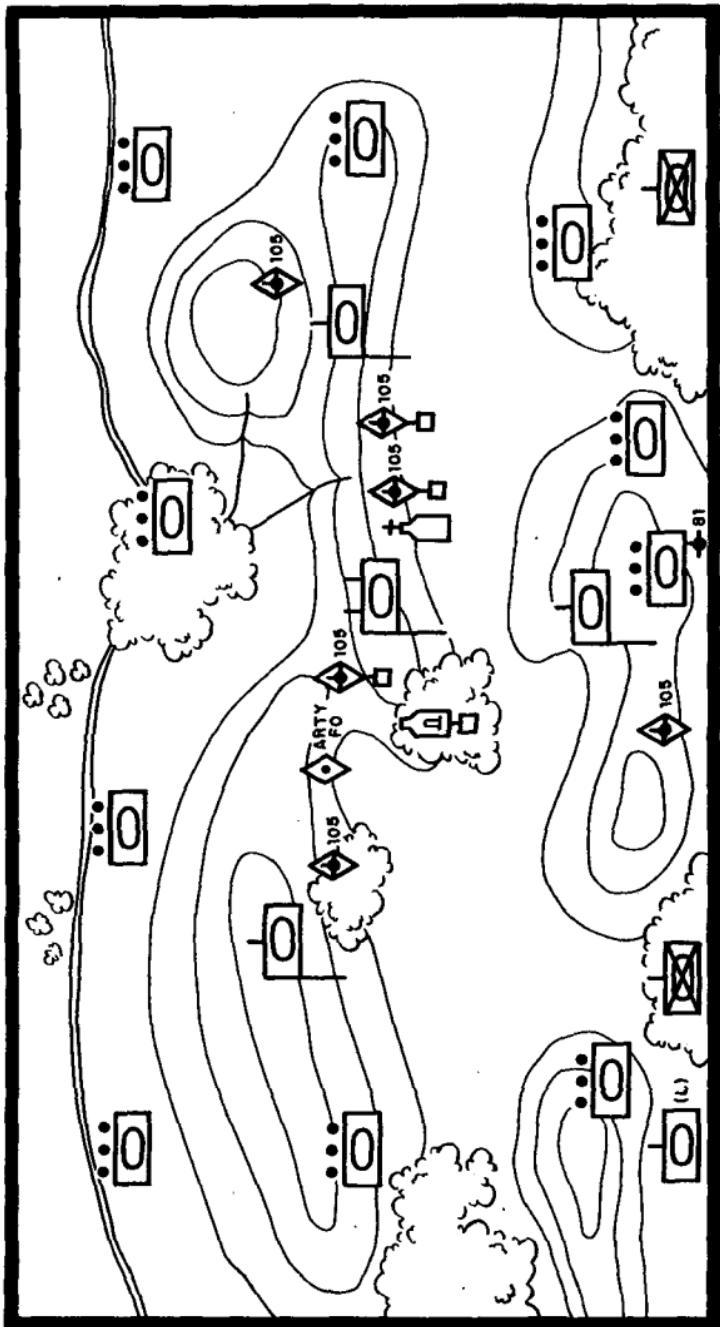


Figure 36. Tanks leading in the assault. The assault gun section moves either between the assault platoons and support platoons, or with the support platoons. The assault gun platoon normally moves in the vicinity of the support company or the support platoons of the assault echelon.

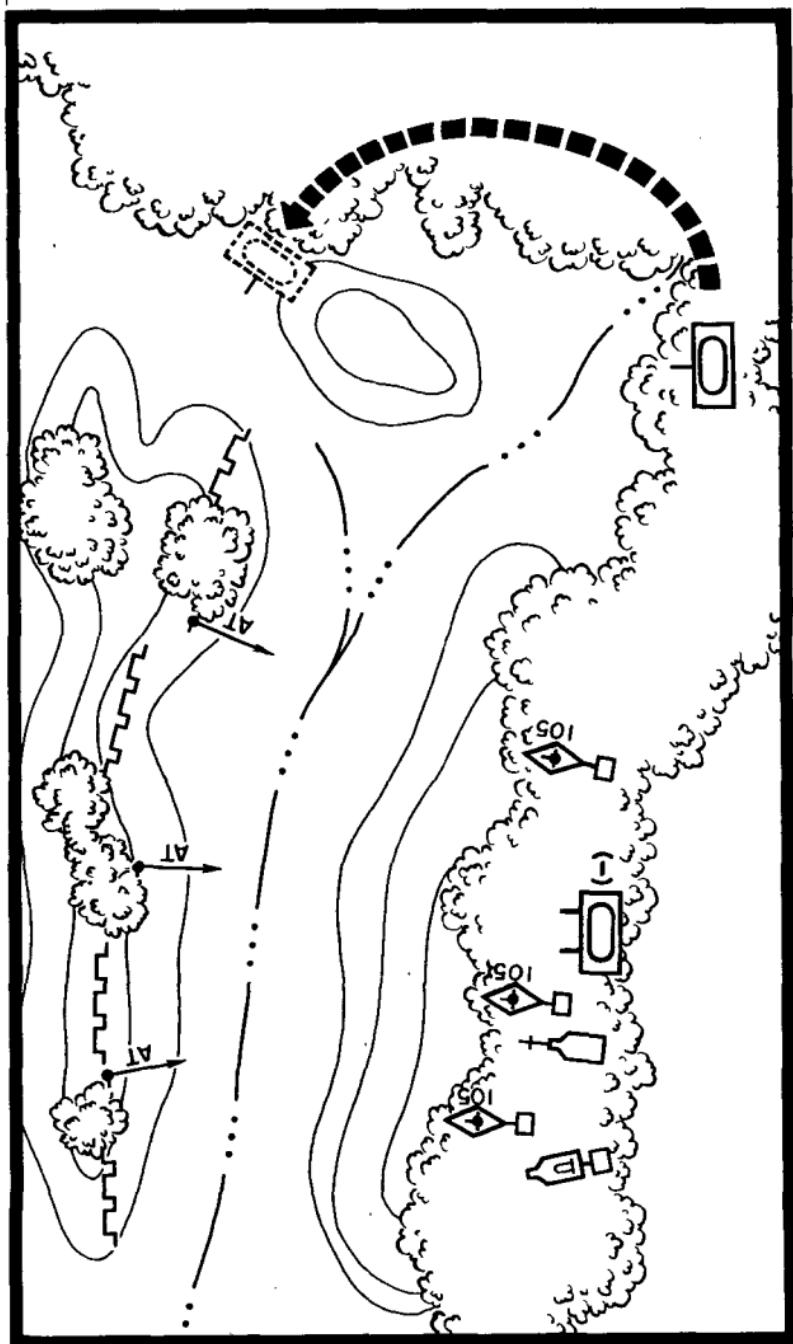


Figure 37. In an envelopment, the assault gun platoon reinforces the base of fire. All fires should be coordinated.

suitable targets and promptly brings fire on such targets and on other targets as directed by the battalion commander.

(2) As the attack progresses, the platoon is displaced so as to give continuous fire support. It usually displaces by section. Figures 36 to 40 cover conduct of the attack.

c. **Assault gun platoon, armored infantry battalion.** (fig. 41). The assault gun platoon of the infantry battalion may support the battalion from concealed positions by indirect fire. The platoon leader adjusts the fire. The firing positions are located to support the battalion and also to be able to repel enemy counterattack by direct fire if necessary. In the relatively slow-moving infantry attack, the assault gun usually employs indirect fire, since the slowness of the attack would expose the

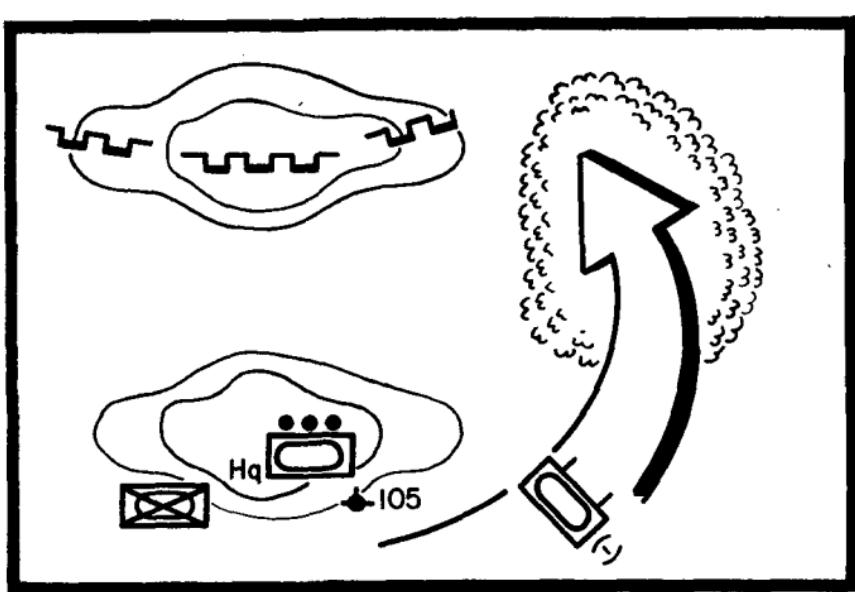


Figure 38. Envelopment. When infantry forms the base of fire, it may be reinforced by the assault gun platoon. The tank company assault gun sections remain with their companies.

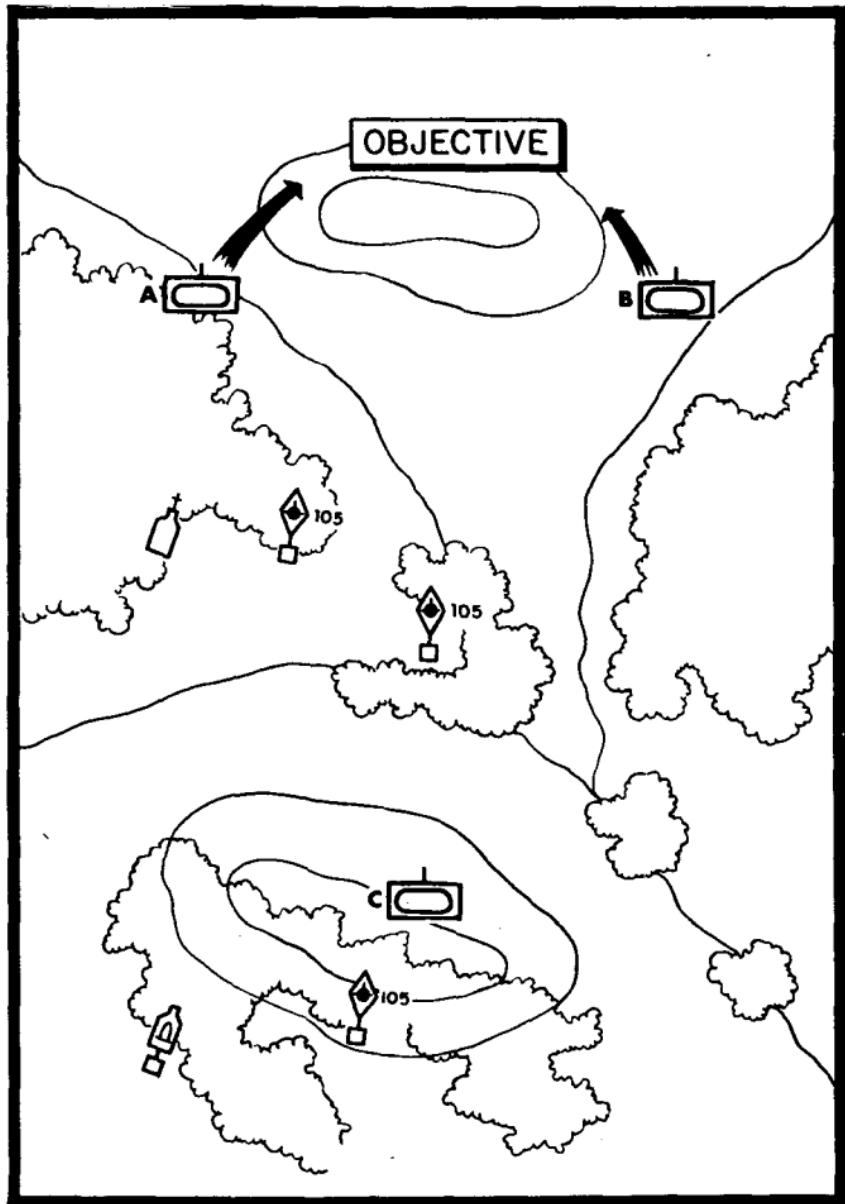


Figure 39. Assault gun platoon of a tank battalion. Assault guns displace forward so as to maintain continuous direct fire support.

WRONG



Wrong.

RIGHT



Right.

Figure 40. Continue to support the supported unit with two sections while one displaces.

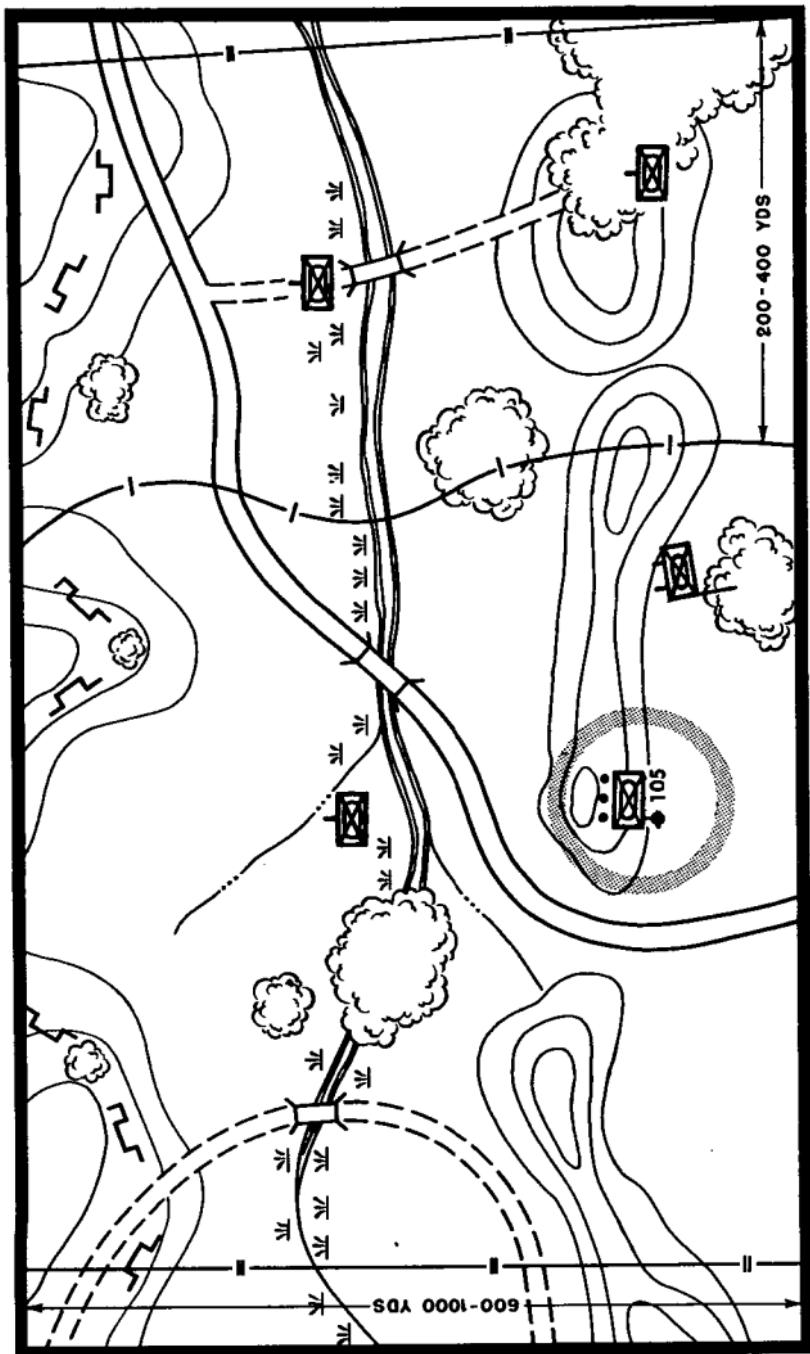


Figure 41. Assault gun platoon in support of an armored infantry battalion.

assault gun section or platoon for too long a period of time if fire were by direct means. Frequently, the platoon leader finds it necessary to dismount the radio from his command vehicle and advance with it on foot to a suitable observation post. Riflemen of the headquarters are used for local security.

d. The rallying point. At the rallying point the assault gun platoon may be assigned a sector to protect the rallying of the supported unit. It may be given a mission of all-around protection of the rallying point. It operates as when protecting a bivouac. The platoon may be left in firing positions and furnish close support to the infantry while it is consolidating its position.

35. PURSUIT. In a pursuit, the assault gun platoon may—

a. Pursue by fire. It engages suitable enemy targets by both direct and indirect fire as long as the enemy is within range.

b. Reinforce the fires of pursuing forces. It employs indirect fire to reinforce artillery fires, or as close support to other direct fire weapons.

c. Destroy obstacles. It fires at road blocks, barriers, antitank devices, and other obstacles which delay the pursuit.

d. Support the direct pressure force or the enveloping force.

Chapter 7

DEFENSIVE ACTION

36. ORGANIZATION FOR DEFENSE. a. In defense the infantry occupies the defensive positions while tanks are used as a reserve. The fires of assault guns are co-ordinated with those of other weapons. The assault gun platoon of the infantry battalion is used as a platoon for direct support of the infantry battalion. Assault guns of tank battalions may be grouped and used as artillery or may be attached to infantry battalions. However, the tank battalion assault guns should be available for support of the tank battalion in counterattack.

b. Indirect fire is used habitually in defense except for fire at emergency targets. Primary, alternate, and supplementary positions are selected, routes thereto reconnoitered, and firing data, including range cards, prepared for all positions. Guns are dug in. Primary, alternate, and supplementary observation posts are selected. When practicable, telephone communication is established between the observation post and the gun positions, and between platoon headquarters and the battalion command post. Extra ammunition is dumped at the gun positions.

c. Although indirect fire is habitual, positions are selected from which direct fire support may be given in an emergency. Furthermore, range cards for indirect fire positions will show data for direct fire from those positions in case of necessity.

37. CONDUCT OF THE DEFENSE. a. In the conduct of the defense the assault guns are used to fire close-in

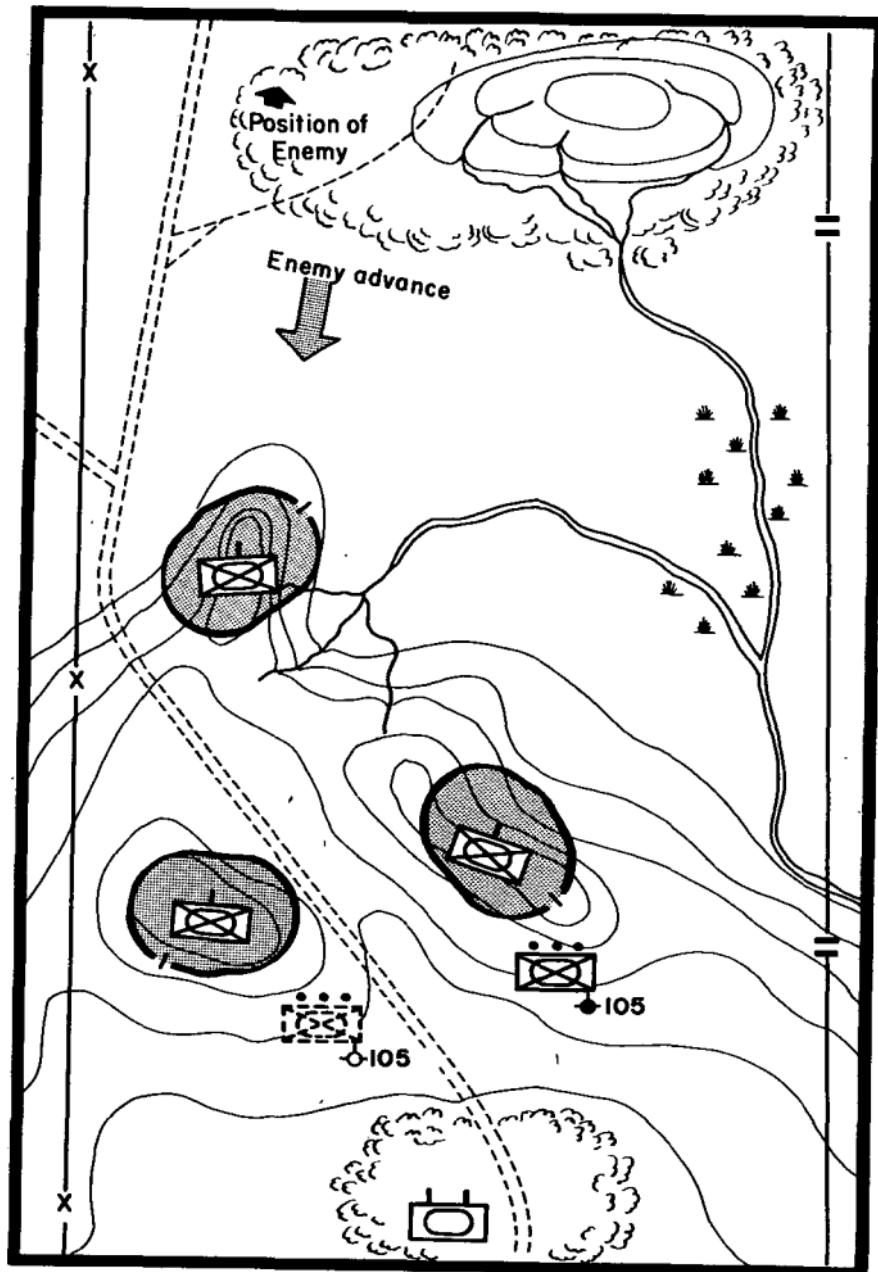


Figure 42. Armored infantry battalion in defensive position.

supporting fires on enemy personnel and weapons and to assist in antitank defense. Long range fires are the function of the artillery and are seldom used by assault guns attached to infantry battalions.

b. The platoon leader keeps in close touch with the battalion commander. He constantly observes his assigned sector. He brings fire promptly upon targets designated by the battalion commander and upon targets of opportunity. He must not hesitate to act upon his own initiative in an emergency requiring immediate fire. However, he should not fire upon targets already adequately covered by artillery or mortar fire.

c. Should the enemy succeed in penetrating the position, the platoon executes fires within the position to assist elements therein. To give adequate support, guns may be moved to new positions when directed by the battalion commander. The platoon will withdraw only upon order of the battalion commander. Withdrawal is usually by bounds so that continuous support may be given. The assault gun platoon supports counterattacks launched against the enemy.

Chapter 8

RETROGRADE MOVEMENTS

38. GENERAL. For details of retrograde movements see FM 100-5, FM 17-33, and FM 17-42. Retrograde movements covered here are withdrawal and delaying action.

39. WITHDRAWAL. a. If withdrawal is made at night, assault guns may be used to fire from previously selected positions on targets data to which have been computed. To facilitate night withdrawal, tanks may make a limited objective attack late in the day. Assault guns support such attack as in the offensive.

b. In daylight withdrawal, assault guns are used to cover the withdrawal by fire. Targets are hostile troop concentrations and tanks in emergency. The platoon may withdraw by bounds.

40. DELAYING ACTION. In delaying action, assault guns are used as for withdrawal and rear guard action. As part of a large delaying force they may be used as in the defensive.

Chapter 9

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

41. GENERAL. The employment of assault gun platoons during special operations follows the tactics and technique for other operations. In landing operations the assault gun may be used on local artillery-type missions involving direct or indirect fire. In jungles, HE shell is suitable for clearing undergrowth. HE AT shell may be fired on bunkers and gun emplacements followed by HE.

Appendix I

TROOP LEADING, ASSAULT GUN PLATOON LEADER

- 1. PHASES OF TROOP LEADING.** a. Reconnaissance.
 - b. Estimate of the situation.
 - c. Plans.
 - d. Orders.
 - e. Supervision.
 - f. Reports.
- 2. ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION.** a. What is my job?
 - b. What forces do I have attached to me?
 - c. What forces does the enemy have?
 - d. Where are likely enemy gun positions?
 - e. How can I best use this terrain?
 - f. What can the enemy do to stop me or my supported unit?
 - g. What plans can I make?
 - h. Which one of these plans is the best?
 - i. What is my decision? (What, when, where, how, why?)
- 3. PLAN.** a. Decision.
 - b. Mission or targets.
 - c. Direction of movement or attack.
 - d. Line of departure or initial point.
 - e. Time of crossing the line of departure or initial point.

- f. Location of rallying points.
- g. Location of initial assault gun platoon positions to include the location for each section.
- h. Location of initial alternate and supplementary positions.
- i. Location of initial alternate and supplementary observation posts.
- j. Location of routes to initial primary, alternate, and supplementary positions and observation posts.
- k. Plan of fire support.
- l. Location of tentative forward gun positions and forward observation posts.
- m. Location of routes to the forward positions.
- n. Method of movement to forward positions.
- o. Security of the platoon.
- p. Special measures for control and coordination of fires.

4. **ORDERS.** Information contained in the paragraphs as follows:

- a. (1) Information of enemy.
- (2) Information of own troops such as higher, adjacent or supported.
- b. This platoon will — (support the attack, support the defense, support the withdrawal) at — (time).
 - (1) Formation.
 - (2) Direction.
 - (3) Objective.
 - (4) LD (MLR) attack position (Route).
- c. Missions of subordinate units, to include fire mission. (Only in extreme cases is the assault gun platoon split.)

- (1) 1st gun section will_____
- (2) 2d gun section will_____
- (3) 3d gun section will_____
- (4) Ammunition section will_____
- (5) Attached units will_____
- (6) Rallying points and alternate rallying points.

d. Aid station at_____

Axis of maintenance_____

e. I will be_____

It is now_____ (time)

Are there any questions?

5. CHECK LIST ON DUTIES OF PLATOON LEADER.

a. On the march. (1) Issue orders, including destination, route, rate of march, density, order of march, initial point, time of crossing initial point, details of air and ground alert guards, scheduled halts.

- (2) Check platoon for readiness for march and report when ready to move out. Report on crossing phase lines.
- (3) Ride with battalion headquarters if so ordered; otherwise ride at head of platoon.
- (4) See that points in march order are obeyed by platoon and in addition check platoon seeing that
 - (a) Signals are relayed.
 - (b) Traffic control vehicles are signalled when to pass column.
 - (c) Vehicles are signalled to by-pass if one vehicle is forced to halt because of mechanical difficulties. (Platoon leader must remember when giving radio orders that the ammunition section has no radio; therefore the ammunition section must be notified either by messenger or hand and arm signals.)

(5) Supervise platoon actions at the halt as to the following:

(a) Road cleared and vehicles placed under any nearby concealment available.

(b) All section leaders move forward to head of platoon to ascertain cause for halts and to receive orders.

(c) Local security posted.

(d) First echelon checks performed.

(e) Men posted to receive and pass on signals for the resumption of the march.

(6) Move forward at halts to company or battalion CP to receive orders.

b. In bivouac.

(1) Get information from guide.

(2) Get platoon off the road immediately.

(3) Assign areas to sections within the platoon.

(4) Dismount and lead vehicles into bivouac.

(5) Establish platoon command post and send two messengers to company command post and two messengers to battalion command post (one to return from each command post immediately).

(6) Report to command post for orders if necessary.

(7) Supervise the following:

(a) Vehicles in positions from which they can be moved out with ease.

(b) Vehicle camouflage and dispersion.

(c) Reports on fuel and ammunition status of vehicles.

(d) Security measures (fox holes or prone shelters, fields of fire, alert guards, fires).

(e) Performance of first echelon maintenance.

(f) Distribution of fuel and ammunition.

(g) Latrines and bivouac police.

- (8) Make reconnaissance for roads and security.
- (9) Give instructions for actions in emergency.
- (10) Report in person to company and battalion commanders with a disposition overlay.

c. In assembly area.

- (1) Same duties as in bivouac.
- (2) Perform reconnaissance as directed by battalion commander.
- (3) Make notes on order.
- (4) Make reconnaissance for possible gun positions from which to support the attack.
- (5) Make own estimate and plan based upon battalion commander's order.
- (6) Meet with the chiefs of sections and drivers, when practicable, at designated place and time.
- (7) If necessary, arrange for passage of assault guns through friendly troops and coordinate communications to include attached or supported units.
- (8) Make check on vehicles, ammunition, personnel, boresighting, recoil oil and gun as a whole.
- (9) Issue platoon order.
- (10) Notify battalion or company commander when ready, (if assigned to support one specific company or unit, notify that commander when ready). NOTE: Most checking is under the supervision of the platoon sergeant, as the platoon leader normally is with the battalion commander.

d. In attack position.

- (1) Join battalion or company commander (if possible, await orders from battalion or company commander).
- (2) Dispose assault gun platoon vehicles in platoon area, observing requirements for cover, concealment, defilade and dispersion.

(3) Make final check of combat condition of men and equipment in platoon.

(4) Orient platoon on terrain.

(5) Show platoon the selected position from which it will support the attack. Tell what type initial position the platoon will take (hull defilade or complete defilade).

(6) Check to see that all men know what they are to do.

(7) Report readiness to battalion or company commander.

NOTE: In certain situations the assault gun platoon does not go to the attack position with the battalion, but goes directly to previously reconnoitered positions from which to support the attack. The platoon leader should perform the above checks in this position.

e. During attack.

(1) Move the platoon to initial positions, where it can support the leading elements in the attack, at the prescribed time and in proper initial formation. Make range card to include fire data to possible enemy positions.

(2) Direct fire on any enemy targets.

(3) Follow the attack in a manner permitting close support to be maintained throughout.

(4) Observe the progress of the supported units and the adjacent units and be prepared to support adjacent units on order of battalion commander.

(5) Control the action and fire of the platoon by radio, hand and arm signals, prearranged pyrotechnics, and by supervision.

(6) Observe the platoon for proper principles of fire, security, dispersion, use of terrain, and conservation of ammunition (with aid of platoon sergeant).

(7) Select type fire, type targets, type ammunition, give fire order, order to fire, and order to cease fire.

(8) Distribute the fire of the platoon on targets in the area designated by the battalion commander.

(9) Report to battalion commander when stopped by terrain or enemy action, upon suffering heavy casualties, or upon a change in the situation.

f. When supported unit reaches objective.

(1) When the supported unit dominates the objective, lift and shift to other targets to flank. When enemy fire is observed beyond the objective, direct fire on that enemy position.

(2) Prepare for a counterattack by preparing to place fire on the enemy at any time.

(3) If supporting the attack from flank positions, prepare to move forward as prearranged or upon order.

(4) Report to battalion commander.

(5) Reorganize platoon hastily.

g. At rallying point.

(1) Lead platoon to rallying point.

(2) Dispose platoon in area assigned, utilizing available cover, concealment and defilade for all-around defense, ready for instant action.

(3) Post individuals at vantage points to obtain observation and protection.

(4) Reorganize platoon by redistributing ammunition and personnel.

(5) Supervise checking for correct bore sight, cleaning of guns, checking of recoil oil, and other first echelon maintenance.

(6) Report status of platoon to company and battalion commanders.

- (7) Check treatment and evacuation of casualties.
- (8) Prepare to carry out further orders.

h. On the defensive.

(1) Based on the battalion commander's (or higher commander's) plan, select the position for the platoon. Also select alternate and supplementary positions.

(2) Construct range card to include fire data to possible enemy avenues of approach, observation posts and gun positions.

(3) Send duplicate copy of range card to battalion commander and other units defending that sector.

(4) Coordinate fire plan with artillery. Give artillery observer the platoon position and information concerning constructed range cards.

(5) Prepare to fire either direct or indirect fire missions.

(6) Insure that the platoon has a large supply of ammunition or arrange for additional ammunition.

(7) Post individual riflemen to secure gun position.

(8) Insure that radios are operating.

(9) Locate friendly mortar positions.

(10) When advisable, assign defense sectors to individual assault guns and have the fire controlled by each chief of section.

(11) When mission is reinforcing of artillery fires, artillery generally runs wire to platoon position. Check on fire orders and fire control.

i. Other missions. If the platoon is given missions of supporting the advance guard, covering detachment, outposts, flank guards or other security missions, the duties of the platoon leader are similar to those listed above.

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